
OWERTVRE DV COVRS.

A TREATISE

ON

The Great Art

A SYSTEM OF PHYSICS ACCORDING TO HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY

AND THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE

MAGISTERIUM.

BY

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Preface.

UNDER the auspices of the "*Université Libre des Hautes Etudes*" of Paris, a Branch of which has recently been established in America, we publish the first volume of a series of classical works whose study constitutes the foundation of the teaching of the “*Faculté des Sciences Hermétiques*.”

It is not without reason that we have chosen Pernety to inaugurate this series. Of the three thousand volumes composing the bibliography of ALCHEMY, those of Dom Antoine-Joseph Pernety are the only ones in which the theories of the Artificers are exposed with method: he is the first and only writer who has endeavored to present a short, concise and complete system of the *Magnum Opus*.

Those valiant defenders of the mystic Faith, to whom we are indebted for the present universal awakening of Idealism, have not failed to recognize the important rôle which Hermetic Philosophers have played in the preservation and transmission of the sacred tradition regarding the rapports existing between God, Man and Nature. Unhappily they have found themselves face to face with the Sphinx, unable to solve the enigma; they have lost their way in the inextricable labyrinth of apparently contradictory symbols and signs, and in the darkness of their ignorance, they have been incapable of distinguishing Truth from the rubbish that surrounds it, or of separating pure physical facts from mere mystical speculations. Having a vague intuition that Hermetism was not solely concerned with the transmutation of metals, but also with the spiritual emancipation of Man, they have profited by a few analogies which presented themselves, and have created a mystical Alchemy in which the *inner man* is the exclusive subject. But while such interpretation may, in many instances, be applied to alchemical symbolism, and while we may believe that in this we follow the traditions of the Rosicrucians (who founded a system in which Alchemy and Kabbalah were indissolubly blended), modern commentators, borrowing the jargon of the Alchemists - who are never more

obscure than when they appear to express themselves plainly [1] - have drawn analogies which a mere acquaintance with the fundamental principles of Physical Alchemy would suffice to cause to be rejected as utterly devoid of appropriateness.

Rosicrucians were indeed mystics, but their studies were above all of a purely physical and experimental character; their association of mysticism and chemistry was founded upon analogies the truth of which could be demonstrated *in the laboratory* and duly verified by the physical senses. No metaphysical proposition was accepted by them which could not be fully confirmed by scientific demonstrations, according to the practice of Roger Bacon, the father of the experimental method.

Alchemists acquired the knowledge of Divine operations by the study of human arts and the observation of natural phenomena. Hermetism begins with the study of the operations of Nature, and ends with the knowledge of the Divine Principle. None, however, must hope to behold the secret Sun of this Royal Art while he remains in darkness regarding the fundamental principles of *physical* Hermetism, or Alchemy.

The Spagyric Art is a dead science; it has long since uttered its last word; nothing remains but a few tracts, fragments of its outer vestment, and a multitude of worthless lucubrations by pseudo-adepts; the secret is lost, for future generations to recover; but, in order to be freed from the trouble of ransacking dusty old books and manuscripts, and of reconstituting, word after word, this science in its integrity by patient research; in order to avoid the tedious work of deciphering the hieroglyphic pentacles and of restoring the secret meaning of the mutilated tracts of the Masters which have reached us through the centuries, one is not permitted to *invent* a new Hermetism, to enlarge it, or to attribute to it a signification which, most probably, it never had. Hermetism is what it is, and we must accept its teachings for what they are worth, without trying to reconcile them with the assertions of modern science, or to give to them any signification that may suggest itself.

Hermetic Philosophy has long since been rejected by the School, and scientific means of investigation are here of no practical use, even XIXth century chemistry offers no clue; for the ideas of the Spagyric Art are absolutely the antithesis of those of official chemistry. The student must make use of other means; but let him guard against preconceived ideas, against his ardent desire to verify, in the obscure symbols of mediæval Artists, his own suppositions. Let him remember that Symbols prove everything, and that the signs chosen to defend the affirmative of any proposition, may also be used successfully in demonstrating the negative of the same proposition; symbols are the expression of the *Absolute* which is neither positive or negative, but positive and negative, according to the point of view from which one judges.

Thus, in order to distinguish the right way, “which leads to the Elysian Fields,” from that “which borders Tartarus,” the assistance of a trusty guide is indispensable. Unfortunately such guides are few, and if, perchance, one is found, the student, ninety-nine times in a hundred, far from being willing to follow in silence, prefers to choose his own way. If the student depends upon his supposed willingness to obey his Initiator, let him shut this book and renounce his plan of lifting the veil which covers the arcana of Hermetic Philosophy, for unprepared as he surely is, he will either fall a victim to impostors, or fail to acknowledge with gratitude the heavenly gift of a Mentor.

There is but *one* method whereby one may succeed without a Master in reconstituting, in its completeness, the Lost Science, and this method which we take pleasure in revealing, as plainly as possible, is infallible in its results. It constitutes the most potent operation of the *Ars Magica*: the

[1] The *Thesaurus Philosophiœ* testifies that the plain speaking of the philosophers is completely illusory, and that it is only in their incomprehensible profundities that we must seek the light of Hermes. - Barrett’s *Lives of the Alchemystical Philosophers*, edited by Arthur Edward Waite, London, 1888, Page 93.

EVOCATION. We shall describe it under its general aspect, referring the Reader to the special works on Transcendental Magic for full details:

Evocation consists in causing departed spirits to manifest their presence before the Conjuror. But as spirits can only appear immaterially - and as *influences* rather than *individuals* - it goes without saying that these beings cannot manifest themselves in tangible form, (susceptible of being photographed), unless appeal is made to our own semi-material, semi-spiritual principle, to our Astral Body; this, however, constitutes the Great Operation to which it is neither necessary nor advisable to have recourse, so much the more that the Evocation, such as we recommend, differs from the Great Operation in that it is of longer duration, practically permanent; whilst the latter is dependent upon the powers of the Conjuror; moreover the Great Operation is possible only for the Initiate in Theurgy, whilst the simple Evocation, as here described, can be performed with success by any one who possesses the pass-words of the First Degree of Initiation: PATIENCE and WILL-POWER.

The Evocation, or Operation of the lesser Mysteries, consists in recreating the atmosphere in which the departed lived while on earth. It is therefore important that the choice of an invisible Master be made *intelligently* from the long list of Hermetic Philosophers. The Operator must know the biography of that Master and obtain a correct impression of his exterior appearance; he must know the history of the time in which that Master lived, the geography of the country in which he resided, the topography of his city, the plan of his house, the disposition of his laboratory. Helping himself by whatever informations books, monuments or tradition can furnish, the Neophyte will assemble and classify every detail concerning the home-life, customs, daily vocations, etc., so as to reconstitute, in the imaginative world, the life of the selected Guide. Place him amidst his disciples, either in his laboratory or at the amphitheatre of the school where he taught; gather all the works most probably known and studied by him, read and re-read them; write from memory the very works of that Master, especially his most obscure passages, for the soul of a writer can always be found in his words, ready to convey the true interpretation to the one *eager* to discover it. Collect objects contemporaneous to that Master, especially books, instruments and works of art. All this constitutes the restoration of the most material part of the atmosphere that will serve as the vehicle for the true magnetic force which shall be the bond uniting the soul, or influence, of the invisible Master to that of the Conjuror. This true magnetic fluid must be established between the mind of the Operator, which now is active, and that of the Master, which is passive; when the rapports are at last established, the mind of the Guide becomes the positive pole and that of the initiate the negative pole of this intellectual battery. To generate the magnetic fluid the student must place his intellect on the same level as that of his chosen Preceptor: he must learn to know and to *ignore* that which the Master knew and ignored; he must believe that which the invisible believed, when on earth, whether modern science accepts or rejects these beliefs; he must think over the same thoughts of the Master, speak his own words, use the same expressions, recite the same prayers, practice the same religion, acquire the same habits, perform the same acts of virtue, live the same life; in a word, he must place the heart and the mind in a thoroughly sympathetic condition, in a perfect unison with the heart and mind of his Mentor, so as to attract the latter into his own atmosphere again, of which he will become the intellectual center, as formerly; he will *incarnate* himself in his disciple whose mind, now a plastic clay, will acquire in its highest degree the faculty of *receptivity*, and will become susceptible of receiving the least impressions from the outer world. The Influence of the being thus evoked, thus brought back into the world by an irresistible magnetism, will then unite with the Operator and continue, through the latter's instrumentality, the work which death interrupted. It is thus that Hans de Bülow, who lived among the souvenirs, the works and the relics of Beethoven, consecrating his entire life to the study of this Master, succeeded in giving that traditional expression established by the composer for the interpretation of his Sonatas and Symphonies.

In order to really *possess* a Master and perform his works as the author himself imagined them, we must prepare within ourselves a temple fit to receive him; we must place all our mental faculties under his control, we must become a docile instrument into his hands. But, by the law of reaction,

this complete submission on our part soon becomes the manifestation of our absolute independence, of our absolute intellectual freedom.

This is the course which we recommend to all our students, and it is to instruct them concerning the scientific opinions of the Hermetic Philosophers that we publish this work of dom Pernety. The opinions herein expressed may not be in accordance with the teaching of scholastic knowledge, but we do not present this work as a substitute for classical Physics and Chemistry. The theories exposed by Pernety were those of the Alchemists! For the mystic, for the seeker of the Universal Panacea, or Philosopher's Stone, the science described in this Treatise is all that is required; nay, it is the sole one to be accepted, regardless of its differences from the results of modern investigation which, for our purpose, are utterly worthless. Just as it is indispensable for the pupils of Edison and Tesla to base their studies upon the latest works on Natural Philosophy, however erroneous the science of to-morrow may prove them to be; it is indispensable, for those who do not recognize the impossibility of transmuting metals, to base their investigations upon the science which was sufficient to Arnaud de Villeneuve, Nicolas Flamel and Paracelsus."[2]

The present work which we have entitled TREATISE ON THE GREAT ART is composed of the introductory remarks preceding the principal works on Alchemy of the savant dom Pernety, especially his *"Fables Egyptiennes et Grecques dévoilées et réduites au même principe"*, (à Paris, *chez Bauche*, 2 volumes in I2, I758). This work is almost the sole source from which modern expounders of Alchemy have derived their informations, forgetting, of course, to give due credit to this author, excluding his works from the bibliographical lists terminating their compilations and even going so far, in some instances, as to mutilate his name, when compelled to quote extensively from his works. The publication of this TREATISE constitutes as much a work of justice and restitution to the learned French monk, as an effort to contribute to the renaissance of a Science containing within itself the germs of the most important and unexpected discoveries and offering a sure guide in the maze of obscure symbols of this most obscure of all Occult Sciences.

Antoine-Joseph Pernety was born in Roanne, France, in 1716; and died at Valence (Dauphiné), in 1801. At an early age he joined the Benedictine Congregation of Saint-Maur and there devoted his life to these patient studies for which Benedictine monks are justly famous; he published numerous works on theology and fine arts, geography and mythology, philosophy and mathematics, but he became celebrated for his researches in the realm of the hidden Sciences. His explorations into forgotten lore led him to the creation of the *"Académie d'Avignon"* a sect of *Illuminati* whose influence in Freemasonry has long been felt: the most famous, if not the most important, degree introduced in the Masonic nomenclature by Pernety is the Twenty-eighth of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, known as *Knight of the Sun*, or *Prince Adept*; and a considerable part of his rite is still preserved in other masonic systems, such as the Martinist Order.

The work which we present to the public is the result of a comparative study of the writings of the Spagyric Philosophers of all times, schools and nationalities, and not merely a summary of the author's personal ideas on the subject; it is a monument of patient research, representing over a quarter of a century of investigation. The writer has carefully analyzed the classical compositions of the Masters, preserving with religious care the dogmas upon which they all agree, and setting aside their contradictions, basing himself upon the axiom that Truth, when once discovered, is the same for

[2] The lamented Grand Master of the Rose Croix Kabbalistique, Stanislas de Guaïta, wrote in his last work: The composition of gold is possible, since Nature composes gold in the bowels of the earth. M.E. Varenne said in 1886: "Compress hydrogen to two hundred thousand atmospheres and you will obtain an ingot of pure gold." (*quoted by Jules Lermina*) The secret of the Transmutation has been lost, but many other secrets of less importance have also been lost. Such are the indelible colours of Egypt and the violin varnish of the *luthiers* of Cremona, which modern chemistry, with all its progress, is unable to analyse. There cannot be the least doubt that the chemical elements of school-chemistry will soon be decomposed into simpler elements till the unity of matter, the protyle of Crookes, the absolute which our forefathers knew so well, will be finally found.

E.B.

all, while error only offers opportunity for discussion.[3] Pernety, following the example of Trévisan, has compared with an extreme attention the Greek, Alexandrian, Arab, French, German, Dutch, English, Kabbalistic, Rosicrucian and Islamic schools of Hermetism, presenting the synthesis of their doctrines in the lucid manner so characteristic of the French savant, by nature the mortal enemy of all that which is obscure and incomprehensible.

The present work is divided into three parts: an Introductory Discourse, an Exposé of Natural Philosophy according to Hermetists, without which all attempt to understand the Art of Transmutations is impossible, and the Theory and Practice of the Magisterium, or Royal Art, briefly, but completely presented.

The editor of this translation has preserved *in the text* the notes of Pernety himself, and has introduced, as foot-notes, annotations borrowed from other works of Pernety, from Albert Poisson, the Champollion of Alchemy, Dr. Papus, Jollivet-Castelot, de Guaïta, etc., in the very few places where the text seemed to allow a complementary explanation. These annotations are always followed by the name of the author to whom the translator is indebted.

The work contains also a table of Alchemical Characters which are so frequently met with in spagyric works and a short Dictionary of Hermetic Symbols, compiled by the lamented Albert Poisson for his "*Théories et Symboles des Alchimistes*," [4] which will afford great help in the reading of alchemic pentacles. E. B.

NEVADA, MISSOURI, March 3, 1898.

[3] By comparing the adepts and examining in what things they agree, and in what they differ, he (Bernard Trévisan) judged that the truth must lie in those maxims wherein they were practically unanimous. He informs us that it was two years before he put his discovery to the test; it was crowned with success, and not withstanding the infirmities of old age, he lived for some time in the enjoyment of his tardy reward. - Barrett's *Lives of the Alchemystical Philosophers.* Edited by Arthur Edward Waite, London, 1888. page 128.

[4]

List of the Modern Works Consulted

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A LOVER OF PHILALETHES - A short Enquiry concerning the Hermetique Art, - in *Collectanea Hermetica*, edited by W. Wynn Wescott - London, 1894.
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Preliminary Discourse

DO not expect to have the approbation of those vast, sublime and penetrating minds which embrace all, which know all without having learned anything, which dispute concerning everything, which decide about everything without knowledge of the cause. It is not to such people that one gives lessons; to them belongs the name of sage, rather than to Democritus, to Plato, to Pythagoras and to the other Greeks who were in Egypt to breathe the hermetic air, and who drew from it the folly of which we will treat. It is not for sages of this character that this work is made: this contagious air of Egypt is diffused throughout it; they would run the risk of being infected by it; as the Gebers, Synesiuses, Moriens, Arnaud de Villeneuves, Raymond Lullys, and so many others, simple enough to believe in this Philosophy. Following the example of Diodorus of Sicily, of Pliny, of Suidas and many other Ancients, they would, perhaps, become credulous enough to regard this Science as real, and to speak of it as such. They might become ridiculous as Borrichius, Kunckel, Beccher, Stahl, mad enough to make treatises which prove it, and to undertake its defense.

But if the example of these celebrated men makes any impression upon minds free from bias and void of prejudice in this respect, there will be found, doubtless, men sufficiently sensible to wish to be instructed, as they, in a Science little known, in truth, but cultivated in all times. Proud ignorance and fatuity alone are capable of despising and condemning without knowledge. Not a hundred years ago, simply the name of Algebra kept one from the study of that science and was revolting to the so-called good sense of the savants! that of Geometry is capable of giving hysterics to the scientific “Petits-Maîtres” of to-day. Little by little one has become familiar with them. The barbarous terms with which they bristle, no longer cause fear; one studies them, one cultivates them, honor has succeeded the repugnance, 1 might say the scorn, with which they were regarded.

Hermetic Philosophy is still in disgrace and consequently in discredit. It is full of enigmas, and probably will not be freed, for a long time, of those allegorical and barbarous terms whose true meaning so few understand. The study of it is so much the more difficult as perpetual metaphors put on the wrong track those who imagine that they understand the authors who treat of it, at the first reading. Moreover these authors warn us that such a Science as this cannot be treated as clearly as the others because of the fatal consequences to civil life which might result from it. They make of it a mystery, and a mystery which they study rather to deepen than to develop. So they continually recommend the reader not to take them literally, to study the laws and processes of Nature, to compare the operations of which they speak with hers; to admit only those which will be found conformable to hers. . . .

Ambition and the love of riches are the only motives which influence almost all of those who work to instruct themselves concerning the processes of this Science; it presents to them mountains of gold in perspective, and long life to enjoy them. What riches for hearts attached to the blessings of this world! They hasten, they run to reach this aim, and as they fear not to arrive there soon enough they take the first way which appears to lead to it most quickly, without taking the trouble to instruct themselves concerning the true way. They walk, they advance, they believe themselves at the end; but as they have walked blindly, they find there a precipice in which they fall. They then think to conceal the shame of their fall by saying that this pretended aim is only a shadow, which they cannot embrace; they treat their guides as perfidious ones; they finally arrive at the point of denying even the possibility of an effect, because they are ignorant of its causes. What! because the greatest naturalists

have lost their night-studies and their works in trying to discover what processes Nature employs to form and to organize the fœtus in the maternal womb, to make a plant germinate and grow, to form the metals in the earth, could we with good grace deny these facts? Would we regard as sensible a man whose ignorance would be the foundation of his negations? One would not even deign to take the trouble to make the least proof to convince him.

But wise people, enlightened and skilful Artists have studied all their lives, and have worked continually to arrive at it, they have given up their lives for it: what must we conclude? That the thing is not real? No: from about the year 550, from the foundation of Rome up to our day, the most skilful people worked to imitate the famous burning mirror of Archimedes, with which he burned the vessels of the Romans in the port of Syracuse; they have not been able to succeed; they treated the fact as an allegory; it was a fable; and even the making of the mirror was impossible. M. de Buffon thinks of taking a simpler way than those who have preceded him, he arrives at the end; we are surprised, we finally avow that the thing is possible.

Let us conclude then, with more reason, that these Savants, these skilful Artists made their own knowledge of too much importance. Instead of following the straight, simple and smooth ways of Nature, they have attributed to her subtleties which she never possessed. Hermetic Art is, say the Philosophers, a mystery hidden to those who rely too much on their own knowledge: it is a gift of God who regards favorably those who are humble, who fear Him, who place all their confidence in Him, and who, as Solomon, demand from Him with eagerness and perseverance that wisdom, who holds in her right hand length of days, and in her left hand riches, *(Proverbs* ch. iii. v. 16); that wisdom which Philosophers prefer to all honors, to all the kingdoms of the world, because she is the Tree of Life to those who lay hold upon her, *(Proverbs,* ch. iii. v. 18).

All Hermetic Philosophers say that, although the *Ars Magna* is a natural thing, both in its essence and in its operations, yet things so surprising take place in it, that they elevate the spirit of man toward the Author of his being, that they manifest His wisdom and glory, that they are much above human intelligence, and that only those comprehend them, whose eyes God deigns to open. This is sufficiently proved by the blunders and lack of success of all those artists, famous in vulgar chemistry, who in spite of all their skill in manipulations, in spite of all their pretended knowledge of Nature, have lost their time, their money, and often their health, in the search of this inestimable treasure.

How many Becchers, Homberts, Boerhaves, Geofroys and other skilled chemists, have by their indefatigable labors forced Nature to reveal to them some of her secrets? In spite of all their carefulness in watching her processes, in analysing her productions, to take her in the act, they have almost always failed, because they have been the tyrants of this Nature and not her true imitators. Sufficiently enlightened in common chemistry, and instructed in its processes, but blind in regard to Hermetic Chemistry, and carried away by custom, they have erected sublimatory, calcinatory, distillatory furnaces, *(Novum Lumen Chemicum; Tract. I).* They have employed an infinite number of vases and crucibles, unknown to simple Nature; they have summoned to their aid the fratricide of natural Fire; how could they have succeeded with such violent processes? They have absolutely departed from those who follow the Hermetic Philosophers, if we are to believe President d'Espagnet, *(Hermetic Arcanum, Can. 6.):*

> “The Alchemists who have given their minds to their well-nigh innumerable Sublimations, Distillations, Solutions, Congelations, to manifold extraction of Spirits and Tinctures, and other operations more subtle than profitable, and so have distracted themselves by a variety of errors, as so many tormentors, will never be inclined again by their own genius to the plain way of Nature and light of Truth; from whence their industrious subtlety hath twined them, and by twinings and turnings, as by the Lybian Quicksands, hath drowned their entangled wits; the only

hope of safety for them remaineth in finding out a faithful guide and master, who may make the Sun clear and conspicuous unto them, and free their eyes from darkness."

"A studious Tyro of a quick wit, constant mind, inflamed with the study of Philosophy, very skilful in natural Philosophy, of a pure heart, complete in manners, mightily devoted to God, though ignorant of practical Chemistry, may with confidence enter into the highway of Nature and peruse the books of the best Philosophers." [5]

"If Hermes, the true father of Philosophy", so says the Cosmopolite (*Novum lumen chemicum, Tract I*), if the subtle Geber, the profound Raymond Lully, and other justly celebrated chemists could return to the earth, our alchemists would not only refuse to regard them as their masters, but would think to confer a favor upon them by owning them as their disciples. It is true that they would not know how to make all those distillations, circulations, calcinations, sublimations, in a word all those innumerable operations which chemists have imagined, because they have wrongly understood the books of the Philosophers."

All real Adepts speak with one voice and if they speak truly, one may, without taking so much trouble, without employing so many vases, without consuming so much charcoal, without ruining one's purse and one's health, one may, I repeat, work in concert with Nature, who, being aided, will lend herself to the desires of the Artist and will freely open to him her treasures. He will learn from her, not how to destroy the bodies which she produces, but how and from what, she composes them, and into what they resolve. She will show him that matter, that chaos from which the Supreme Being has formed the Universe. They will see Nature, as in a mirror, and her reflection will manifest to them the infinite wisdom of the Creator, who directs and guides her, in all her operations, by a simple and unique way which constitutes all the mystery of the *Magnum Opus.*

But that thing called Philosopher's Stone, Universal Medicine, Golden Panacea, does it exist in reality as well as in speculation? Why, through the ages, have so many persons, whom Heaven seemed to have favored with knowledge superior to that of most men, sought it in vain? But, on the other hand, so many trustworthy historians, so many wise men have attested its existence, and have left in enigmatical writings and allegories the method of making it which can scarcely be doubted, when one knows how to adapt these writings to the principles of Nature.

The Hermetic Philosophers differ absolutely from the common Philosophers or Physicists. The latter have no certain system. They invent new ones daily, and the last seems to be conceived only to contradict, and destroy those that have preceded it. Briefly, if one is erected and established, it is upon the ruins of its predecessor, and it will exist only until a new one overthrows it and takes its place

On the contrary, Hermetic Philosophers are all agreed; no one of them contradicts the principles of the other. He who wrote thirty years ago speaks as he who lived two thousand years ago. One thing which appears a little singular is that they never weary of repeating that axiom which the church *(Vincent de Lerin. Commonit.)* adopts as the most infallible mark of the truth in that which it presents to us for belief: *Quod ubique quod ab omnibus, et quod semper creditum est, id firmissimè credendum puta.* Observe, say they, read, meditate on the things which have been taught in all times, and by all Philosophers; the truth is enclosed in the passages where they all agree.

What an indication, indeed, when men who have lived in ages so distant, and in countries so different in language, and, I dare to say it, in their manner of thinking, all agree on one point. What! would Egyptians, Arabs, Chinese, Greeks, Jews, Italians, Germans, Americans, French, English, etc., have agreed, without knowing each other, without understanding each other, and without having

[5] 'Translation by Dr.Wynn Westcott. in *Collectanea Hermetica.*

communicated their ideas, in writing and in speaking about a chimera, an imaginary entity? without taking into account all the works on this subject, which were burned by the orders of Diocletian,[6] who thought thus to deprive the Egyptians of the means of making gold, and to render them unable to sustain war against him, there still remain to us, in all the languages of the world, works sufficiently numerous to justify to the incredulous what 1 have just advanced. The library of the King alone preserves a great number of ancient and modern manuscripts, in all languages, relating to this science.

Michel Maier said on this subject, in an Epigram, found at the beginning of his Treatise, entitled *Symbola aureæ mensæ:*

Unum opus en priscis hæc usque ad tempora seclis
Consona diffusis gentibus ora dedit.

Let one read Hermes, Egyptian; Abraham, Isaac de Moiros, Jews, quoted by Avicenna; Democritus, Orpheus, Aristotle, (*De Secretis Secretorum*), Olympiodoros, HeIiodorus (*De rebus chemicis ad Theodosium Imperatorem*), Etienne, (*De magna et sacra scientia, ad Heraclium Cæsarem*) and other Greeks; Synesius, Theophilus, Abugazal, etc., Africans; Avicenna, (*De re recta. Tractatulus Chemicus. Tractatus ad Assem Philosophum. De anima artis*), Rhasis, Geber, Artephius, Alphidius, Hamuel, surnamed the *Elder*, Rosinus, Arabs; Albertus Magnus, (*De Alchymia, Concordantia Philosophorum; De Compositione Compositi, etc*.), Bernard Trévisan, Basil Valentin, Germans; Alain (*Liber Chemicœ*), Isaac, father and son, Pontanus, Flemish or Dutch; Arnaud de Villeneuve, Nicolas Flamel, Denis Zachaire, Christophe Parisien, Gui de Montanor, d'Espagnet, French; Morien, Pierre Bon de Ferrare, the anonymous author of the *"Marriage of the Sun and the Moon,"* Italians; Raymond Lully, Spanish; Roger Bacon, (*Speculum Alchemiœ*), Hortulain, Jean Dastin, Richard, George Ripley, Thomas Norton, Philalethes and the Cosmopolite, English or Scotch. Finally, many anonymous authors, (*Turba Philosophorum, Seu Codex veritatis, Clangor Buccinœ, Scala Philosophorum, Aurora consurgens, Ludus puerorum, Thesaurus Philosophiœ, etc*.), of all countries and of different ages: there will not be found among them one whose principles are different from those of the others. Does not this conformity of ideas and principles form, at least a presumption in favor of the truth and reality of what they teach? If all the ancient fables of Homer, of Orpheus, and of the Egyptians, are only allegories of this Art, as I claim to prove in this work, by the ground-work and origin of the fables themselves, as well as by their conformity to the allegories of almost all Philosophers, could one persuade one's self that this science is only a vague phantom, which never had any existence among the real productions of Nature?

But if this science has a real object; if this Art has existed, and if we must believe the Philosophers, concerning the wonderful things which they relate of it, why is it so scorned, why so decried, why so discredited? Because the practice of this Art has never been clearly taught. All the Authors, ancient and modern, who treat of it, do so under the veil of Hieroglyphics, Enigmas, Allegories and Fables; so that those who have wished to study them have generally taken the wrong course, whence has arisen a kind of sect, which, through having wrongly understood and explained the writings of the philosophers, has introduced a new Chemistry, and has imagined that its system was the only real one. Many persons have become celebrated in this field. Some skilled in the principles, others extremely dexterous in practice, especially in the experience required for the success of certain operations, they have all united against Hermetic Alchemy; they have written in a manner more easily comprehended by the multitude; they have proved their opinions by specious arguments. By making

[6] Postquam (inquit Paulus Diac. in vita Diocletiani) Alchillem Ægypiorum Ducem octomenses in Alexandria Ægypti obsessum profligasset Diocletianus omnes Chymicæ artis libros diligenti studio requisitos conflagravit, ne reparatis opibus Romanis repugnarent. *Orosius* says the same thing, ch.16, B.7. *Suidas*, about the word Chemia expresses himself thus: Chemia est auri et argenti confectio, cujus libros Diocletianus perquisitos exussit, eo quod Ægyptii res novas contra Diocletianum moliti fuerant, duriter atque hostiliter eos tractavit. Quo tempore etiam libros de Chemia auri et argenti à veteribus conscriptos conquisivit et exussit, ne deinceps Ægyptiis divitiæ ex Arte illa contingerent, neve pecuniarum affluentia confisi in posterum Romanis rebellarent.

at random, mixtures of different substances, and by working blindly, without knowing what the result would be, they have seen monsters arise; and the same chance which produced them has served as a basis for the principles then established. The same mixtures, reiterated, the same work repeated, have given exactly the same result; but they have not observed that this result was monstrous, and analogous only to the abnormal productions of Nature, and not to those which result from her processes, when she confines herself to the classes peculiar to each kingdom. Always from the union of an ass and a mare results a monstrous animal called a mule; for nature acts always in the same manner when the same materials are furnished her, whether to produce monsters, or to form beings conformable to their particular species. If mules came to us from some distant isle, and we knew nothing of their birth, we would certainly be tempted to believe that these animals form a class, which is multiplied as the others. We would not suspect that they were monsters. We are affected, in this same manner, by the results of almost all chemical operations; we consider abnormal productions as productions made in the natural order of Nature. So that one might say of this kind of Chemistry, that it is the science of destroying methodically the Mixts produced by Nature, in order to form from them monsters, which have almost the same appearance and properties as the natural Mixts. Would more be necessary to conciliate the Public?

Prepossessed by these deceitful appearances; overwhelmed by subtle writings; wearied by the multiplied invectives against Hermetic Alchemy, unknown even to its aggressors, is it surprising that the multitude scorns it?

Basil Valentin, (*Azoth des Philosophes*), compares the “souffleurs” to the Pharisees, who were in honor and authority with the Public, because of their affectation of religion and piety. They were**,** said he, hypocrites, attached only to the earth and their own interests; who would abuse the confidence and credulity of the people, ever ready to be taken by appearances; because their sight is not keen enough to pierce the exterior of things. Yet, let not one imagine that by such a discourse I intend to injure the chemistry of our days. One has found means of rendering it useful; and too much praise cannot be given to those who make an assiduous study of it. The curious experiments which most chemists have made can only satisfy the public. Medicine derives so many advantages from Chemistry, that to decry it would to be hostile to the good of the People. It has contributed not a little to the commodities of life by the means which it has furnished of perfecting Metallurgy and other arts. Porcelain, faience are fruits of chemistry. It furnishes materials for tinctures, for glass-making, etc. But because its utility is recognized, must we conclude that it is the only true chemistry? And must Hermetic Chemistry be rejected and scorned for this? It is true, that many people claim to be Philosophers, and take advantage of the credulity of the foolish. But is Hermetic Science to be blamed for this? Do not the Philosophers cry loud enough to be heard by all, and to warn against the snares laid by this class of people. There is not one of them who does not say that the matter of this Art is of low price, and even that it costs nothing; that the fire, necessary to work it does not cost more; that only one vase, or at most two, is necessary for the whole course of work. Let us hear d’Espagnet, (*Can. 35*):

> “Philosophical work demands more time and labor than expense; for there remains very little to be done when one has the required Matter. Those who demand great sums to attain this object, have more confidence in riches of others than in the science of this Art. Therefore, let the amateur be on his guard, and not fall into the snares which rogues set for him, rogues who wish for his purse even while they promise him mountains of gold. They demand the Sun to guide them in the operations of this Art, because they do not see in the least.”

Thus it is not necessary to lay the blame on Hermetic Chemistry, which is no more responsible than is honesty for knavery. A stream may become foul and ill-smelling from the dirt which it collects in its course, without its source being the less pure, the less beautiful, the less clear.

Those who still decry Hermetic Science are those bastards of alchemy commonly known as souffleurs and seekers of the Philosopher's Stone. They are idolaters of Hermetic Philosophy. All the receipts presented to them are for them as so many gods before whom they bend the knee. Many of this class are instructed in the operations of common chemistry; they have even much skill in manipulations; but they are not instructed in the principles of Hermetic Philosophy, and will never succeed. Others are ignorant even of the principles of common chemistry, and these are, properly speaking, the *souffleurs.* To them we may apply the proverb: *Alchemia est ars, cujus initium laborare, medium mentiri, finis mendicare.*

Most of the Artists, skilful in common Chemistry, do not deny the possibility of the Philosopher's Stone; the result of many of their operations is a sufficient proof of this. But they are slaves to human opinion; they would not dare to openly avow that they recognize it as possible, because they fear to expose themselves to the ridicule of the ignorant, and of pretended savants, blinded by prejudice. In public, they jest about it, or at least speak of it with so much indifference, that one suspects that they do not regard it as real, while the tests which they make, in private, tend to its quest. After having passed many years in the midst of their furnaces, without having succeeded, their vanity is offended; they are ashamed of having failed; then, they seek to indemnify themselves, to avenge themselves, by speaking evil of that which they have been unable to obtain. These are the people who had no equals in the theory and practice of Chemistry; they have assumed to be such; they have proved it as well as they could, but by repeating it or causing it to be heralded by others, they have caused people to believe it. When, at the end of their life, they think advisable to decry Hermetic Philosophy, the multitude will not examine and see if they do it wrongly; the reputation which they have acquired gives them the right, and one would not dare but to applaud them. Yes, they say, if the thing had been feasible, it could not have escaped the science, the penetration, the dexterity of such a skilful man. These impressions are insensibly strengthened; a second one, not having succeeded better than the former, has been disappointed in his hope and his work; he adds his voice to that of the others; he even cries louder if he can; he makes himself heard; the prejudice grows, until finally one reaches the point of saying with them, that Hermetic Philosophy is a chimera, and what is more, they are convinced without any knowledge of the subject. Those to whom experience has proved the contrary, content with their fate, do not envy them the applause of the ignorant. *Sapientiam et doctrinam stulti descipiunt, (Proverbs, ch. I).*

Some have written to undeceive them - (Beccher, Stahl, M. Pott, M. de Justi, undertake its defense openly in their *Memoirs*) - they have not wished to shake off the yoke of prejudice, they have remained under it.

But finally, what constitutes the difference between common chemistry and Hermetic Chemistry? Simply this. The first is, properly speaking, the art of destroying the composites which Nature has formed; and the second is the art of working with Nature to perfect them. The first puts in practice the furious and destructive Tyrant of Nature; the second employs her gentle, benign Agent. Hermetic Philosophy takes as the subject of its work the secondary[7] or chief principles of things, to lead them to the perfection of which they are susceptible, by processes conformable to those of Nature. Common chemistry takes the Mixts which have already reached their point of perfection, decomposes and destroys them. Those who may desire to carry further the parallelism between these two arts, may have recourse to the work which one of the great antagonists of Hermetic Philosophy, Father Kircher, S. J., has composed, and which Manget has inserted in the first volume of his *Bibliothèque de la Chymie curieuse*. The Hermetic Philosophers scarcely fail to mark the difference of these two arts in their works. But the infallible mark, by which one may distinguish an Adept from a chemist, is that the Adept, according to all Philosophers, takes only one thing, or, at most, two of the same nature, one vase, or perhaps two, and a single furnace to perfect his work; on the contrary, the chemist works

[7] Secondary Matter, or *Seed of Metals*, the primal Matter of the Philosopher's Work, to distinguish it from the *Prima Materia*, or First Created Matter, which is beyond the reach of the Artist.

on all kinds of matters, indiscriminately. This is also the stone by the touch of which you must try those rogues, or *souffleurs,* who have designs upon your purse, who demand gold in order to make it, and who, instead of the transmutation which they promise you, make indeed only a transfer of gold from your purse to theirs. This remark is not the less applicable to those *souffleurs* of good faith and honesty, who think to be in the right way, and who deceive others while deceiving themselves. If this work makes enough impression upon minds to convince of the possibility and reality of Hermetic Philosophy, God grant that it may also serve to undeceive those who have a mania for spending their property in blowing charcoal, in erecting furnaces, in calcining, in sublimating, in distilling, finally in reducing everything to nothing, that is, to ashes and smoke; the Adepts do not run after gold and silver. Morien gives a great proof of this in the *Roi Calid*. The latter having found many books which treated of Hermetic Science, and being able to comprehend nothing of them, offered a great reward to him who would explain them, *(Entretien du Roi Calid)*. The charms of this reward brought to him many *souffleurs*. Then Morien, the Hermit, departed from his desert attracted not by the promised recompense, but by the desire of manifesting the power of God, and of showing how wonderful He is in all His works. He found Calid, and demanded as the others a suitable place to work, in order to prove, by his works, the truth of his words. Morien, having finished his operations, left the Perfect Stone in a vase around which he wrote: *Those who have all that is necessary for them, have need neither of recompense nor of the aid of others.* He then departed without saying a word, and returned to his solitude. Calid having found this vase, and having read the writing, understood well what it signified, and after having tested the Powder, he banished, or put to death, all those who had wished to deceive him.

Therefore, Philosophers rightly say that this Stone is the center and source of virtues, since those who possess it scorn all the vanities of the world, vain glory, ambition; since they esteem gold no more than sand or dust, (*Sapientia, chap. 7*), and silver is to them no more than dirt. Wisdom alone makes any impression upon them; envy, jealousy and other tumultuous passions do not excite the tempests of their heart; they have no other desires than to live to please God, no other satisfaction than to render themselves secretly useful to their neighbour, and to penetrate more and more into the secrets of Nature.

Hermetic Philosophy is therefore, the school of piety and religion. Those to whom God accords the knowledge of it are either already pious or they become so, (*Flamel, Hieroglyph*). *A*ll the Philosophers begin their works by demanding of those who read them, with the intention of penetrating into the sanctuary of Nature, an upright heart and a God-fearing spirit*: Initium sapientiæ timor Domini,* a compassionate mind, to aid the poor, a profound humility, and a fixed purpose to do all for the glory of the Creator, who conceals His secrets from the proud and pretended wise of the world to manifest them to the humble, (*Matthew, ch. XI*).

When our first father heard the sentence of death pronounced as a punishment for his disobedience, he received, at the same time, the promise of a Deliverer who was to save the entire human race. God, all-pitiful, did not wish to permit the most beautiful work of His hands to perish absolutely. The same wisdom which had prepared with so much goodness the remedy for the soul, did not forget to indicate one against the evils which were to afflict the body. But, just as all men do not profit by the means of safety, which Jesus Christ has procured for us, and which God offers to us, so all men do not know how to use the remedy, which can cure the ills of the body, although the matter of which it is composed is common, and present before their eyes. They see it without knowing, it, and employ it for other purposes than the one for which it was designed, (*Basil Valentin Azoth des Phil*. and the *Cosmopolite*). This proves, indeed, that it is a gift of God which is bestowed upon those who please Him. *Vir insipiens non cognoscet, et stultus non intelliget hæc.* Although Solomon, the wisest of men, says to, us, *Altissimus de terra creavit medicinam et posuit Deus super terram medicamentum quod sapiens non despiciet,* (*Eccl., ch. 38*).

It is this matter which God used to manifest His wisdom in the composition of all beings. He animated it with the breath of that spirit which “moved upon the face of the waters,” before His omnipotence had disentangled the chaos of the Universe. This it is, which is susceptible of all forms, and which, properly speaking, has none of its own, (*B. Valentin*). Thus most of the Philosophers compare the confection of their Stone to the creation of the Universe. There was, so say the Scriptures, (*Genesis, ch.1*), a confused chaos, in which no individual could be distinguished. The terrestrial globe was submerged in the waters; they seemed to contain the Heavens, and to enclose in their womb the germs of all things. There was no light, all was in darkness. The light appeared, the shadows were dissipated, and the stars were placed in the firmament. The Philosophical Work is exactly the same thing. First it is a shadowy chaos; all appears so confused in it, that one cannot distinguish the principles which compose the matter of the Stone. The Heaven of the Philosophers is plunged in the waters, shadows cover all their surface; finally light separates them; the Moon and the Sun are manifested, and bring joy to the heart of the Artist and life to the matter.

This chaos consists of the *siccum* and *humidum*. The *siccum* constitutes the Earth; the *humidum* is the Water. The shadows are the black color, which Philosophers call *nigrum, nigro nigrius*, (black, blacker than black itself). This is the Philosophical Night, and the palpable shadows. Light in the creation of the world appeared before the sun; it is that whiteness of matter, so much desired, which succeeds the black color. Finally the sun appears, of an orange color, the red of which is deepened, little by little to the red of purple: this makes the completion of the first work..

The Creator wished then to place the seal upon His work; He formed Man from Earth, and from an earth which appeared inanimate: He breathed into him the breath of life. That which God did then in regard to Man, the agent of Nature, whom some call her ARCHEUS, (*Paracelsus, van Helmont*), does now with the Earth or Philosophical clay. He works it by its interior action, and animates it so that it begins to live, and to strengthen itself, day by day, until it reaches perfection. Morien, (*loc. cit.*), having remarked this analogy, has explained the confection of the *Magisterium* by a comparison, drawn from the creation and the generation of Man. Some even claim that Hermès speaks of the resurrection of bodies in his *Pymander,* because he concludes it by stating what he has observed in the progress of the *Magisterium*. The same matter which had been forced to a certain degree of perfection in the first work, is dissolved and putrified, which can very well be called a death, since our Saviour has said of a grain which one sows, (*Flamel*), *Nisi granum frumenti cadens in terram mortuum fuerit ipsum solum manet.* In this putrefaction the Philosophical Matter becomes a black, volatile earth, more subtle than any other powder. The Adepts even call it *Corpse* when it is in this state, and say that it has the odor of one; not, says Flamel, that the Artist smells a bad odor, since it is made in a sealed Vase; but he judges that it is such by the analogy of its corruption to that of dead bodies. This powder, or ashes, which Morien says we must not despise, because it is to revive, and because it contains the diadem of the Philosopher-King, recovers its vigor, little by little, in proportion as it escapes from the arms of death, that is to say, from the blackness: it is revivified, and takes a more brilliant splendour, a state of incorruptibility more noble that the one in which it existed before its putrefaction.

The Egyptians, observing this metamorphosis, imagined the existence of the Phœnix, which they said to be a bird of purple color, which sprang from its own ashes. But this fabulous bird is simply the Philosopher's Stone, which has reached the color of purple after its putrefaction.

Several ancient Philosophers, enlightened by these wonderful effects of Nature, have concluded from them, with Hermès, from whom they had derived the principles in Egypt, that there was a new life after death had taken away this. This is what they have wished to prove when they have spoken of the resurrection of plants from their own ashes into other plants of the same species. One finds no one who has spoken of God and of Man with so much elevation and nobility. He explains even, how one can say of men that they are Gods. *Ego dixi dii estis, et filii excelsi omnes***,** says David; and Hermès: (*Pymand ch. 11*.), “The soul, O Thaut, is of the essence of God himself; for God has an essence, and

what it is He alone knows. The soul is not a part, separated from this divine essence as a part is separated from any other material; but it is, we may say, an effusion, almost as the light of the sun, which is not the sun itself. This soul is a God in Man; this is why one says of men that they are Gods, because that which constitutes, properly speaking, humanity is akin to divinity."

What then must be the knowledge of man? Is it surprising that, enlightened by the Father of lights, he penetrates even into the gloomiest, most hidden recesses of Nature? that he knows her properties, and how to use them? But God distributes His gifts as it pleases Him. If He is good enough to establish a remedy for the maladies which afflict humanity He has not judged fit to make it known to all. Consequently Morien says, (*Entretients de Calid et de Morien*), "that the "*Magisterium* is the secret of secrets of the most high God, Creator of all that exists; and that He himself has revealed this secret to His holy Prophets, whose souls He has placed in Paradise."

If this secret is a gift of God, some will say it must doubtless be placed in the category of the talents which God bestows and which must not be buried. If Philosophers are people so pious, so charitable, why do we see so few good works on their part? A single one, Nicolas Flamel, in France, has built and endowed churches and hospitals. These monuments exist today in the sight of all Paris. If there are other Philosophers, why do they not follow such a good example? Why do they not cure the sick? Why do they not relieve the families of honest people overwhelmed with misery? I answer, that one does not know all the good done in secret. One must not do good and then publish it at the sound of the trumpet; the left hand, according to the precept of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, must not know the good which the right hand doeth. It was not known, until after the death of Flamel, who was the author of these good works. The hieroglyphic figures, which he had placed in the Cemetery of the Innocents, presented only that which was pious and in conformity with religion. He himself lived humbly, without ostentation, and without giving the least sign of the secret which he possessed. Moreover, there were in those times greater facilities for doing good than now.

Philosophers are not so common as physicians. They are few in number. They possess the secret of curing all maladies. They are not lacking the desire to do good to all the world; but this world is so perverse that it is dangerous for them to try it. They would do so, at the risk of their lives. Will they cure some one as by miracle? A murmur will be heard among the Physicians and the People; and even those who most doubted the existence of the Philosophical Remedy will then suspect that there is such a thing. This man will be followed; his actions will be observed; the report will spread; the avaricious, the ambitious will pursue him to discover his secret. Then, what can he hope for but persecutions, or voluntary exile from his country?

The experience of the Cosmopolite and of Philalethes proves this sufficiently. "We are," says the latter, "enveloped in malediction and infamy; we cannot enjoy tranquilly the society of our friends; whosoever will discover who we are, will wish either to extort from us our secret, or to plan our ruin, if we refuse to reveal it to them. The world today is so wicked and so perverse, interest and ambition so dominate men that all their actions have no other aim but the satisfaction of these passions. Do we wish, as the Apostles, to perform works of mercy, one returns to us evil for good. I have made the trial of this lately in some distant places. I have cured, as by miracle, some dying ones, abandoned by Physicians; and to escape persecution, I have been obliged, more than once, to change my name, my dress, to shave my hair and my beard, and to flee under cover of the night." Yet, to what greater dangers would a Philosopher not expose himself, if he should make the transmutation? although he should intend to make use of the gold for a very simple life, and for the benefit of those in need**.** This gold, finer and more beautiful than common gold, as they say it is, will soon be recognized. By this mark alone, one will suspect the bearer, perhaps even of counterfeiting money. What frightful consequences would a Philosopher, charged with such a suspicion, not have to fear?

I know that many Physicians exercise their profession, not so much through self-interest as through the desire of serving the Public; but all of them are not so. Some will rejoice at the good fortune of

their neighbour, others will be angry because they have been deprived of a chance to increase their revenues. Jealousy would not fail to take possession of their hearts, and would their vengeance be long in making its effects felt? Hermetic Science is not taught in schools of Medicine, although we cannot doubt that Hippocrates understood it, when we weigh well scattered expressions in his works, and the praise which he bestowed upon Democritus before the inhabitants of Abdera, who regarded this Philosopher as a madman because, on returning from Egypt, he distributed among them almost all his patrimony, in order to live as a Philosopher in a little country house, removed from tumult. Yet this would be an insufficient proof of the antiquity of Hermetic Science; but there are so many others, that to deny this antiquity is to show one's ignorance of ancient authors. What means Pindare, (*Olymp. 6*), when he relates that the greatest of the gods caused to fall in the city of Rhodes a golden snow, made by the art of Vulcan? Zosimus, Panopolite, Eusebius and Synesius teach us that this Science was long cultivated at Memphis in Egypt. They quote the works of Hermès. Plutarch says, (*Theolog. Physico Grœcor*), that the ancient Theology of the Greeks and Barbarians was simply a discourse on Physics, hidden under the veil of Fables. He even tries to explain it when he says that by Latona they understood night; by Juno, the earth; by Apollo, the sun; and by Jupiter, heat. He adds that the Egyptians said that Osiris was the sun, Isis the moon, Jupiter the universal spirit diffused throughout Nature, and Vulcan, fire, etc. Manetho enlarges much upon this subject.

Origen, (*L. I. against Celse*), says that the Egyptians amused the people by these fables, and that they veiled their Philosophy under the names of the gods of the country. Coringius, (*Omininò tamen et ipse existimo Œgyptiorum Hierophantas, omnium mortalium principes χρυσοωοιησιν jactisasse, et ab his chemiœ profluxisse exordia*), in spite of all that he has written against Hermetic Philosophy, has been forced, by strong proofs, to avow that the Priests of Egypt practiced the Art of making gold, and that Chemistry took its origin there. Saint Clement of Alexandria, in his *Stromates*, gives great praise to the six works of Hermès, on Medicine. Diodorus of Sicily, (*Antiq. l. 4, c.2*), speaks in detail of a secret which the Kings of Egypt possessed, of drawing gold from a white marble, found on the frontiers of their Empire. Strabo, (*Geogr. l. 17*), also, makes mention of a black stone, from which they made many mortars, at Memphis. It will be seen, in the course of this work, that this black stone, white marble and gold were merely allegorical, and signified the Philosopher's Stone, which has reached the state of the black color, Stone which the same Philosophers have called *Mortar*, because the matter is ground and dissolved. The white marble was this same matter, arrived at the white color, called Marble because of its fixity. The gold was the Philosophical Gold, which is derived from this whiteness, or the fixed Red Stone. More detailed explanations of this will be found in the course of this work.

Philo, the Jew, (*Lib. I. de Vita Mosis*), relates that Moses learned in Egypt, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and *Symbolical Philosophy*, which was written only in sacred characters, Astronomy and Mathematics. Saint Clement of Alexandria adds to these Medicine and the knowledge of Hieroglyphics, which the priests taught only to their sons, and the sons of the kings of their country. (*Cum autem Moses jam esset œtate grandior, Arithmeticam et Geometriam, Rhytmicam et Harmonicam et prœterea medicinum simul et musicam ab iis* (*Œgyptiis*), *edoctus est, qui inter Œgyptios erant insignoires; et prœterea eam, quœ traditur per symbola et signa Philosophiam, quam in litteris ostendunt hieroglyphicis. Alium autem doctrinœ orbem tanquam puerum regium Grœci eum docuere in Œgypto, ut decit Philo in Vita Mosis. Didicit autem litteras Œgyptiorum et rerum cœlestium scientiam à Chaldeis et ab Œgyptiis. Unde in ejus gestis, dicitur eruditus, fuisse in omni scientia Œgyptiorum.* (*Clemens Alexand. l. I. Strom.*)

Hermès was the first who taught all these sciences to the Egyptians, according to Diodorus of Sicily, (*L. 2 c. I*), and Strabo, (*Lib. I7*). Father Kircher, although very bitter against Hermetic Philosophy, has proved, himself, (*Œdyp. Œgypt. L. 2 p. 2*), that it was practiced in Egypt. See also Diodorus, (*Antiq. I, c. II*) and Julius Matern. Firmicus, (*lib. 3, c. I. de Petosiri et Nicepso*). Saint Clement of Alexandria thus expresses himself on this subject: We have still forty-two works of Hermès which are very useful and very necessary. Thirty-six of these books contain all the

Philosophy of the Egyptians; and the other six relate especially to Medicine: the first treats of the construction of the body or anatomy; the second of diseases; the third of instruments; the fourth of medicines; the fifth of the eye; and the sixth of diseases of women.

Homer had travelled in Egypt, (*Diodorus of Sicily, l. I, c. 2*), and learned many things from his association with the Priests of that country. We may even say that from here he derived his Fables. He gives proof of this in several places in his works, and especially in his third Hymn, to Mercury, in which he says that this god was the first who invented the Art of Fire: πυρ∫ς δ⌈ ωεμαιετο τ⌈χνην. V. 108 & V. III - Ερμης τοι πρωτςα πυρη⌊α, π⌋ρ, τ ◊ν⌈δωχε. Homer even speaks of Hermès, as the author of riches, and calls him consequently Χρυσ⌈ρραωις, δωτορ⌈⟨ων. It is because of this that he says, (*ibid v. 249*), that Apollo went to Hermès to obtain news of the oxen which had been stolen from him. He saw him lying in his obscure cavern, which was full of nectar, of ambrosia, of gold and silver, and of the red and white garments of Nymphs. This nectar, this ambrosia, and these garments of the Nymphs refer to the Philosophic Work.

Esdras, in his fourth book, chapter eight, thus expresses himself: *Quomodo interrogabis terram, et dicet tibi, quoniam dabit terram multam magis, unde fiat fictile, parvum autem pulverem unde aurum fit.*

Stephen, of Byzantium, was so well persuaded that Hermès was the author of Chemistry, and had such a high idea of him, that he has not hesitated to name Egypt Ερμοχ|μιος, Vossius, (*de Idol.*), has thought it his duty to correct this word by the one Ερμοχημιος. It was doubtless this which led Homer to imagine that his plants *Moly* and *Nepenthes*, which had so many virtues, came from Egypt. Pliny (*Lib. 13, c.2*), bears witness to this in the following terms: *Homerus quidem primus doctrinarum et antiquitatis parens, multus alias in admiratione Circes, gloriam herbarum Œgypto tribuit. Herbas certè Œgyptias à Regis uxore traditas suæ Helenæ plurimas narrat, ac nobile illud nepenthes, oblivionem tristitiæ, veniamque afferens, ab Helenâ utique omnibus mortalibus propinandum.*

It is then beyond doubt that the Chemical Art of Hermès was known among the Egyptians. It is scarcely less certain that the Greeks who travelled in Egypt learned it there, at least some of them; and that, having learned it from hieroglyphics, they taught it under the veil of fables. Eustathius implies this in his commentary on the Iliad.

The idea of making gold by the aid of Art is therefore not new; besides the proofs which we have given, Pliny, (*Lib. 33, c. 4*), confirms it because he relates of Caligula “The love which Caius Caligula had for gold, induced this Prince to work to obtain it. Therefore, says this author, he digested a great quantity of orpiment and succeeded, indeed, in making excellent gold; but in such a small quantity that he lost much more than he gained.” Caligula knew, then, that gold could be made artificially; therefore Hermetic Philosophy was known.

As for the Arabs, no one doubts that both Hermetic and common Chemistry have been always known among them. Moreover, Albusarius teaches us, (*Dynastiâ nonâ*), that the Arabs have preserved a great number of the works of the Chaldeans, of the Egyptians, and of the Greeks, by the translation which they made of them into their own language; we have still the writings of Geber, Avicenna, Abubali, Alphidius, Alchindis, and many others on these subjects. One may even say that Chemistry has been diffused through all Europe by means of them. Albert the Great, Archbishop of Ratisbonne, is one of the first known, since the Arabs. Among other erudite works on Dialectics, Mathematics, Physics, Metaphysics, Theology and Medicine, several works on Chemistry are found, one of which bears the title *de Alchymia*; it has been swelled later on with an infinity of additions and sophistications. The second is entitled *De Concordantia Philosophorum*. The third, *De Compositione*

Compositi. He has also written a Treatise on minerals, at the end of which he places a special article on the Matter of Philosophers, under the name *De Electrum Minerale*.

In the first of these Treatises, he says: “The desire to instruct myself in Hermetic Chemistry has led me to travel over many cities and provinces, to visit the wise in order to acquaint myself with this Science. I have copied and studied, with much care and attention, the books which treat of it, but for a long time, I have not recognized what they advance as true. I studied, anew, books for and against it, and I have been unable to derive any benefit from them. I have met many canons, some learned in Physics, some ignorant, who meddled in this Art, at an enormous expense; in spite of their trouble, their work and their money, they did not succeed. But all this did not discourage me; I began to work myself; I made expenditures; I read; I watched; I went from one place to another, and I meditated constantly on these words of Avicenna: *If the thing is, how is it? if it is not, how is it not*? Then I worked; I studied with perseverance, until I found what I sought for. I owe my success to the grace of the Holy Spirit, who enlightened me, and not to my own knowledge.” He says also in his Treatise on minerals, *(Lib. 3, c. i):* “It is not the province of Natural Philosophers to judge of the transmutation of metallic bodies, and of the change of one into the other: this belongs to the Art called Alchemy. This Science is very certain, because it teaches one to know each thing by its peculiar cause; and it is not difficult for it to distinguish from things even the accidental parts, which are not of their nature.” He then adds, in the second chapter of the same book: “The Primal Matter of the metals is a humidity, oily, subtle, incorporated and even largely mixed with terrestrial matter.” He speaks as a Philosopher, and in conformity with Hermetists, as will be seen later on.

Arnaud de Villeneuve, Raymond Lully, his disciple, and Flamel, appeared shortly after; the number increased little by little, and this Science spread throughout all the Kingdoms of Europe. In the last century one saw the Cosmopolite, d'Espagnet, and Philalethes - doubtless there were many others - and some live in our times; but the number is so small, or they conceal themselves so well, that they cannot be discovered. This is a strong proof that they do not seek the glory of the world, or at least, that they fear the effects of its perversity. They are guarded in their speech, as well as in their writings. Works on this subject appear from time to time; but it is only necessary to have read and meditated on those of the true Philosophers, to perceive that these resemble them only in the barbarous terms and enigmatical style, and not at all in the main. Their authors had read good books; they quote them often enough, but so inopportunely as to clearly prove, either that they have not meditated on them, or have done so, in such a manner as to adapt the expressions of the Philosophers to the false ideas which prejudice has placed in their minds, in regard to the operations and Matter, and not so as to rectify their ideas by those of the authors whom they read. These works of false Philosophers are numerous; everybody has wished to write, most of them, doubtless, in order to find in the purse of the bookstore a resource, which would otherwise fail them, or at least to make a name, which they certainly do not deserve. A certain author formerly expressed the desire that some true Philosopher would have enough charity toward the Public, to publish a list of the good writers on this Science, so as to prevent many from reading with confidence the bad, who lead them into error. Olaus Borrichius, the Dane, had printed at the end of the last century, a work, entitled: *Conspectus Chymicorum celebriorum*. He makes separate articles on each one, and tells, prudently enough, what he thinks of them. He excludes a great number of authors from the class of true Philosophers; but those whom he gives as true - are they, indeed, so? Besides, the number is so great, that one does not know which to choose in preference to the others. Consequently one will be embarrassed, when wishing to devote one's self to this study. I would prefer to take the wise advice of d'Espagnet, which he gives in these terms in his *Arcanum Hermeticæ Philosophiæ Opus, can. 9*. “Let a lover of truth make use of few authors, but of the best note and experienced truth.” And canon 10, “As for the authors of chiefest note, who have discoursed both acutely and truly of the secrets of Nature and hidden Philosophy. Hermès, (*Emerald Table*) and Morienus Romanus, (*Entretients du Roi Calid et de Morien*), amongst the Ancients, are, in my judgment, of the highest esteem; amongst the moderns, Count Trévisan, (*La Philosophie des Métaux,* and his *Lettre à Thomas de Boulogne*), and Raimundus Lullius are in greatest reverence with one; for what that most acute Doctor hath omitted, none almost

hath spoken; let a student therefore peruse his works, yea, let him often read over his Former Testament, and Codicil, and accept them as a legacy of very great worth. To these two volumes let him add both his volumes of Practice, out of which works all things desirable may be collected, especially the truth of the First Matter, of the degrees of Fire, and the Regimen of the Whole, wherein the final Work is finished, and those things which our Ancestors so carefully laboured to keep secret. (Most of the works of Raimundus Lullius, not here mentioned, are worse than useless). "The occult causes of, things and the secret motions of Nature, are demonstrated nowhere more clearly and faithfully. Concerning the first and mystical Water of the Philosophers he hath set down few things, yet very pithily."

As for that Clear Water sought for by many, found by so few, yet obvious and profitable unto all, which is the "Basis of the Philosophers' Work, a noble Pole, not more famous for his learning than subtlety of wit, who wrote anonymously, but whose name, notwithstanding a double Anagram hath betrayed, (*The Cosmopolite. When d'Espagnet wrote this, the Public was not yet aware of his error in regard to the author of this book, which Michael Sendivogius, a Pole, published under an anagram of his name; but it has since been made known that he received the manuscript from the widow of the Cosmopolite."*), hath in his *Novum Lumen Chymicum*, *Parabola* and *Œnigma*, as also in his *Tract on Sulphur*, spoken largely and freely enough; yet he hath expressed all things concerning it so plainly, that nothing can be more satisfactory to him that desireth knowledge. (*Can II*.)"

"Philosophers, continues the same author, (*Can. 12*), "do usually express themselves more pithily in types and enigmatical figures, (as by a mute kind of speech), than by words; see, for example, Senior's Table, the Allegorical Pictures of Rosarius, the Pictures of Abraham the Jew in Flamel, and the drawings of Flamel himself; of the later sort, the rare Emblems of the most learned Michael Maiërus, wherein the mysteries of the Ancients are so fully opened, and as new Perspectives they present antiquated truth, and though designed remote from our age, yet are near unto our eyes, and are perfectly to be perceived it by us."[8]

Such are the only authors commended by d'Espagnet, as being beyond all doubt, competent to instruct in Hermetic Philosophy, any man who wishes to apply himself to it. He says that one must not be contented with reading them once or twice, but must read them ten times or more, without becoming discouraged; that one must do this with a pure heart, free from the fatiguing cares of the age, with a fixed purpose to use one's knowledge of this Science only for the glory of God, and the good of one's neighbour, so that God may diffuse His wisdom in the mind and heart; for Wisdom, so says the Sage, will never dwell in a heart impure and stained with sin.

Yet d'Espagnet demands an extended knowledge of Physics; and, for this reason, I will place at the end of this Discourse, an abridged Treatise which will contain its general Principles, drawn from the Hermetic Philosophers, which have been collected by d'Espagnet in his *Enchyridion*. *The* Hermetic Treatise, which follows is absolutely necessary to prepare the reader to understand this work.[9] I will add quotations from the Philosophers to show that they all agree on the same points.

The study of Physics cannot be too highly recommended, for from it one learns to know the principles which Nature employs in the composition and formation of the individuals of the three kingdoms, animal, vegetable and mineral. Without this knowledge, one would work blindly, and would try to form a body, from that which would be suitable only to form one of another genus or species, entirely different from that proposed. For man comes from man, ox from ox, plant from its own seed, and metal from its own germ. Therefore, he who would seek, outside of the metallic nature, the art and means of multiplying, or of perfecting the metal would be certainly in error. Yet

[8] Translation by W.Wynn Westcott, in Collectanea Hermetica. Vol. 1, pp. 13-14

[9] *Les Fables Egyptiennes et Grecques dévoilées* of which this work is an extract.
E.B.

we must avow that Nature alone could not multiply the metals, as does Hermetic Art. It is true that the metals contain within themselves this multiplicative property; but they are apples plucked before their maturity, according to Flamel. The perfect bodies or metals (Philosophical) contain this more perfect, more abundant germ; but it is so obstinately bound to them, that only Hermetic Solution can draw it out. He who has the secret of it, has the secret of the Magnum Opus, if we are to believe the Philosophers. It is necessary, in order to succeed, to know the agents which Nature employs to reduce the Mixts to their principles; because each body is composed of that into which it may be naturally resolved. The principles of Physics, which follow in detail, may well serve as a torch to enlighten the steps of him who would penetrate the wells of Democritus and there discover the truth, hidden in the thickest shadows. For this well is only the enigmas, the allegories, and the obscurity, scattered throughout the works of the Philosophers, who have learned from the Egyptians, as did Democritus, *not* to unveil the secrets of wisdom.

PART I

General Principles of Physics According to Hermetic Philosophy.

It is not given to all to penetrate the innermost sanctuary of the secrets of Nature, very few know the road that leads to it. Some, impatient, err by taking paths which seem to shorten the route; others find, at almost every step, cross-roads which perplex them, lead to the left and to Tartarus, instead of holding the right which lead to the Elysian Fields, because they have not, as Æneas, a sibyl for a guide. Others think not to be mistaken in following the most beaten and most frequented ways. Yet all perceive, after long labors, that far from having reached their aim, they have either passed on one side or turned their back upon it.[10]

Errors have their source in prejudice as well as in the want of knowledge and sound instructions. The true road must be very simple, since there is nothing more simple than the operations of Nature. But although traced by this same Nature, it is little frequented; and even those who pass in it make it their jealous duty to conceal their steps with thorns and brambles. One walks there only, through the obscurity of fables and enigmas; it is very difficult not to go astray, unless a guardian angel bears the torch before us.[11]

It is then necessary to know Nature before undertaking to imitate her and to perfect what she has left on the road to perfection. The study of Physics gives us this knowledge; not of that natural philosophy of the schools, which teaches only speculations, and stores the memory with terms more obscure than the thing which one wishes to explain. Physics, which claiming to define clearly a body, tells us that it is a composition of points, or parts; of points which, led from one place to another, will form lines; these lines, brought together, a surface, whence extent and other dimensions; from the union of parts will result a body, and from their separation, divisibility *ad infinitum***.** Finally, so many other reasonings of this kind, which are incapable of satisfying a mind curious to arrive at a palpable and practical knowledge of the individuals who compose this vast Universe. It is to Chemical Philosophy, that one must have recourse. It is a practical Science, founded on the theory, the truth of which experience has proved.[12] But this experience is unfortunately so rare that many people doubt its existence.

In vain authors, people of mind, of genius, and very wise in other departments, have wished to invent systems, in order to represent to us, by a flowery description, the formation and birth of the world. One is caught in *whirlwinds*[13] the too rapid movement of which has borne him away, he is lost with them. His *Prima Materia*, divided into subtle, ramous and globulous parts, has left us only an empty subject for artful discussions, without teaching us what is the essence of bodies. Another,[14] not less ingenious, has thought of submitting all to calculation, and has imagined a *reciprocal attraction*, which would, at most, aid us in giving the reason for the actual movement of bodies, without giving us any information as to the principles of which they are composed. He knew very well that this would have been to revive, under a new name, the occult qualities of the Peripateticians,[15] banished so long from the School; also he has stated this attraction only as a conjecture, while his votaries have made it their duty to uphold it as a real thing.

[10] "Therefore I will not step one step farther without a Guide, for I dread going again into the Labyrinth." (Collectanea Hermetica, edited by Dr. Wynn Westcott. Vol. III. A *Short Enquiry Concerning the Hermetic Art*, by a Lover of Philalethea, page 30).

[11] "This guide must be a very wise Man, indued with singular gifts: - *Ibid*.

[12] See "*Traité Méthodique de Science Occulte*," by Papus, p. 643, for irrefutable proofs of the possibility of the Transmutation of metals.

[13] Theory of Descartes, who taught that every star was a sun occupying the center of an immense circulary current, within which moved each planet, itself the center of an interior current. These whirlwinds, in spite of their inequality in regard to the space they occupy, are nevertheless compensated by the rapports existing between the volume of the central body and the expanse of the current. E.B.

[14] Newton.

[15] Disciples of Aristotole. It was customary for the Master to instruct his disciples while walking with them in the country. From theis the etymology of the word Peripatetician, from the Greek *to walk*.

The head of a third author, struck by the same blow with which his pretended comet struck the sun, has permitted his ideals to take routes as irregular as those which he fixes for the planets, formed, according to him, of parts separated by shock of the "*igneous body*" of the star which presides over the day.

The imaginations of a Talliamed, and other similar writers, are dreams which merit only scorn or indignation. Finally, all those who have wished to depart from what Moses has left us in Genesis, have lost themselves in their vain reasonings.

Let one not say that Moses has wished to make only Christians and not Philosophers. Instructed by the revelation of the Author of Nature, well-versed in all the sciences of the Egyptians, who were most enlightened in all those which we cultivate today, who, better than he, could teach us something certain as to the history of the Universe?

His system, it is true, is very fit to make Christians; but is this quality, which is lacking in most of the others, incompatible with truth? Everything in it announces the grandeur, the omnipotence and wisdom of the Creator; but at the same time, everything manifests to us the creature, such as he is. God spoke and all was made: *Dixit et facta sunt*, (*Gen. I*). That was enough for Christians, but not for Philosophers. Moses adds whence this world has been derived; what order it has pleased the Supreme Being to place in the formation of each kingdom of Nature. He does more: he declares positively what is the principle of all that which exists, and what gives life and movement to each individual. Could he say more in so few words? Could one demand from him that he should describe the anatomy of all the parts of these individuals; and if he had done so, would one have had more faith in him? One wishes to examine; and that because one doubts. One doubts through IGNORANCE; and on such a foundation what system can one erect which will not soon fall in ruins?

The wise man could not better designate this kind of architects, these makers of systems, than by saying that God has given over the Universe to their vain reasonings, (*Eccles. ch. III, v. II*). Let us say more: there is no one, versed in the Science of Nature, who does not recognize Moses as a man inspired of God, as a great philosopher and a true physicist. He has described the creation of the World and of Man with as much truth as if he had assisted in person. But let us confess, at the same time, that his writings are so sublime, that they are not within the comprehension of all; and that those who combat him, do so because they do not understand him, because the shadows of their ignorance blind them, and their systems are only mad dreams of a head inflated with vanity and diseased with too much presumption. Nothing more simple than Physics. This subject, although very complicated to the eyes of the ignorant, has only a single principle divided into parts, some more subtle than others. The different proportions employed in the mixture, the reunion and combinations of the more subtle parts with those which are less so, form all the individuals of Nature, and as these combinations are almost infinite, the number of *Mixts* [16] or Composites is also infinite.[17]

God is an eternal Being, an infinite Unity, the radical Principle of all: His essence is a great light, His power is omnipotence, His desire a perfect good, His absolute will an accomplished work. To him who would know more, there remains only astonishment, admiration, silence and an impenetrable abyss of glory. Before Creation, He was as if folded within Himself and sufficient into Himself. In creation, He brought forth this great work which He had conceived for all Eternity. He developed Himself by a manifest extension of Himself, and rendered actually material this ideal world, as if He had wished to render palpable the image of His Divinity. This is what Hermès has wished to make us understand, when he says that God changed form: that then the World was

[16] We have adopted this orthography for designating, without confusion, bodies formed by the asociation of different elements; Mixts are what modern chemistry calls composed substances, or composites. - E.B.

[17] Phenomena in material bodies and in organic bodies have for conditions the same elements and the same elementary properties. *It is the complexity of the arrangement which causes the difference*. - CLAUDE BERNARD.

manifested and changed into Light, (*Divine Pymander, chap. 1*). It appears probable that the Ancients understood something like this**,** by the birth of Pallas, issuing from the brain of Jupiter, with the aid of Vulcan, or Light.

Not less wise in His combinations than powerful in His operations, the Creator has established such order in the organic mass of the Universe, that superior things are mixed without confusion with inferior ones, and become similar to them by certain analogy.[18] The extremes are very closely bound by an imperceptible mean, or a sacred knot,[19] of that adorable Workman, so that all obeys the direction of the Supreme Moderator, while the bond of the different parts can be broken only by Him who has combined them. Hermès was right in saying that "that which is below is like that which is above, in order to perfect all the admirable things which we see", (*Tabula Smaragdina*).

Of the First Matter[20]

Some Philosophers have supposed a Matter existing before the elements;[21] as they did not understand it, they have spoken of it in a very obscure manner. Aristotle, who appears to have believed the World eternal, speaks of a universal First Matter, yet, without daring to entangle himself in the dark windings of the ideas which he had of it, he has expressed himself in regard to it in a very ambiguous manner. He regarded it as the principle of all sensible things, and seems to wish to imply that the elements were formed of a kind of antipathy, or repugnance, which was found between the parts of this Matter, (d*e Ortu et Interitu BII, Chap. 1-2*). He would have reasoned better, if he had seen only sympathy and perfect harmony; since one sees no oppositions in the elements themselves, although one usually thinks that fire is opposed to water. One would not be mistaken, if he noticed that this pretended opposition comes only from the aim of their qualities and the difference of subtlety of their parts, since there is no water without fire.

Thales, Heraclitus, Hesiod, have regarded water as the First Matter of things. Moses appears, (*Genesis, Chap. 1*), to favor this idea by giving the names Abyss and Water to this First Matter; not that he understood water as the element which we drink, but as a kind of smoke, a humid vapor, thick and dark, which is condensed, more or less, according to the greater or less density of the things which has pleased the Creator to form from it. This mist, this immense vapor, was condensed or rarefied into a universal chaotic Water, which thus became the principle of all for the present and for the future, (*Cosmop. Tract 4*).

In its beginning this Water was volatile, as a mist; condensation made of it a matter more or less fixed. But whatsoever may have been this Matter, the first principle of things, it was created in shadows too thick for the human mind to see clearly. Only the Author of Nature knows it, and in vain would theologians and philosophers wish to determine what it was; yet, it is very probable that this dark abyss, this chaos, was an aqueous, or humid, matter, since it would be more easily rarefied and condensed, and consequently more suitable, because of these qualities, for the construction of the heaven and earth.

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[18] The fundamental dogma of the Occult Sciences is resumes in the well-known aphorism: "Harmony results from the analogy of contraries." - E.B.

[19] This secret bond, uniting into a triunity all opposites, whether physical or metaphysical, constitutes the GRAND ARCANUM, the *Universal Solvent* of Alchymists. - E.B.

[20] The First Matter or *Prima Materia,* or Hyle, is the Cosmic Ether, the Grand Telesma of Hermès. The Alchemical Theories are founded upon the unity of matter; the Artificers recognized but one Cosmic element, a chemical absolute which they named Azoth. The dogma of the unity of matter, after having been rejected by modern chemistry, is now again attracting the attention of scientists. The Unity of Matter was symbolically represented by a Serpent biting its tail, the circle being the hieroglyphic of the continuity of material transformations through a gradual imperceptible progression. E.B.

[21].In Hermetic Philosophy, the elements mean certain conditions in which bodies are found: they are the equivalents of Solid, Liquid, Gaseous, etc.

The Sacred Scripture calls this unformed mass sometimes Empty Earth and sometimes Water, although it was actually neither one nor the other, but only in potentiality. It would, then, be permissible to conjecture that it could have been almost like fumes, or a thick vapor, stupid and inert, torpid by a kind of cold, and without action, until the same Word which created this vapor, infused in it a vivifying spirit, which became visible and palpable by the effects which it produced.

The separation of the waters above the firmament from the waters below, of which mention is made in Genesis, seems to have been made by a kind of sublimation of the more subtle and more tenuous parts, from those which were less so, almost as in a distillation, where the spirits rise and separate from the heavier, more terrestrial parts, and occupy the upper part of the vase, while the grosser ones remain at the bottom.

This operation could have been made only by the aid of that luminous spirit which was infused in the mass. For light is an igneous spirit, which by acting on this vapor, and in it, rendered some parts heavier by condensation, and opaque by their closer adhesion; this spirit drove them toward the inferior region, where they kept the shadows in which they were first buried.[22] The parts more tenuous, and which had become more and more homogeneous by uniformity of their tenuity and purity, were elevated and pressed towards the upper region where, being less condensed, they permitted a freer passage to Light, which was manifested in all its splendour.

That which proves that the dark Abyss, the Chaos, or the World's First Matter, was an aqueous and humid mass, is that, besides the reasons which we have brought forward, we have a palpable instance under our eyes. The property of water is to run, to flow, so long as heat animates and holds it in its fluid state. The continuity of bodies, the adhesion of their parts, is due to the aqueous humour. It is the ciment which unites and binds the elementary parts of bodies. So long as it is not separated from them entirely, they preserve the solidity of their mass. But if fire warms these bodies beyond the degree necessary for their preservation in their state of actual being, it drives away, rarefies this humour, makes it evaporate, and the body is reduced to powder, because the bond which united its parts no longer exists.

Heat is the instrument which fire employs in its operations; it even produces by this means two effects, opposite in appearance, but conformable to the laws of Nature, and representing to us that which has taken place in the disentanglement of chaos. In separating the most tenuous, the most humid part from the most terrestrial, heat rarefies the first and condenses the second. Thus, by the separation of the heterogeneous, is made the union of the homogeneous.

Indeed, we see in the world only water, more or less condensed. Between the heavens and the earth, all is smoke, mist, vapors, pressed from the center, the interior of the earth, and elevated above its circumference in the part which we call air. The weakness of the organs of our senses does not permit us to see the subtle vapors, or emanations of celestial bodies, which we call influences, and which mingle with the vapors sublimating from sub-lunar bodies. The eyes of the mind must aid the weakness of the eyes of the body.

At all times bodies exhale a subtle vapor, which is manifested more clearly in summer. The warm air sublimates the waters into vapors, and attracts them to itself. When, after a rain, the rays of the sun beam upon the earth, one sees it smoke and exhale itself in vapor. These vapors hover in the air in the form of fogs, when they do not rise far above the surface of the earth: but when they mount to the middle region, one sees them float, here and there, in the form of clouds. Then they are resolved into rain, snow, hail, etc., and fall to return to their origin. The workman feels this to his great

[22] This Universal Light, when considered particularly as the main metal-forming agent, is called AZOTH, or Sophic Mercury. It is the menstrum, the Universal Solvent, the bond of union, or in less mystic terms, the Cosmic Ether dynamized.
DE GUAÏTA

inconvenience, when he works vigorously. Even the idle man feels it in great heat. The body perspires always, and the transpiration which often runs from the brow manifests this sufficiently.

Those who have accepted the fantastical ideas of the rabbis, have believed that there existed, before this First Matter, a certain principle, more ancient than it, to which they have very improperly given the name of *Hyle* [23]. It was less a body than an immense shadow; less a thing, than a very obscure image of a thing, which one could rather call a gloomy phantom of being, a very black night and the retreat or center of shadows, finally, a thing which exists only in potentiality, and which the human mind could imagine only in a dream. But even the imagination could represent it to us, only as a man born blind represents to himself the light of the sun. These votaries of the rabbis have seen fit to say that God drew from the First Principle a gloomy, formless abyss as the matter from which would be derived the elements and the world. But finally, everything announces to us that Water was the first principle of things.

The Spirit of God which moved upon the waters, (*Gen., ch. I*), was the instrument which the Supreme Architect used, to give form to the Universe. It diffused Light instantly, reduced from latent into actual existence the germs of things, up to this time confused in chaos, and, by a constant alternation of coagulations and resolutions, it maintains all individuals scattered through all the mass; it animates each part of it, and by a continual and secret operation, it gives movement to each individual, according to the genius and species to which it has appointed it. It is, properly speaking, the *soul* of the world; and he who ignores or denies it, ignores the laws of the Universe.

Of Nature

To this First Motive or principle of generation and transformation is joined a second material one, to which we give the name of Nature. The eye of God, always attentive to His work, is, properly speaking, Nature herself, and the laws which He has placed for her preservation, are the causes of all that which takes place in the Universe. The Nature which we have just called a second material motive, is a secondary nature, a faithful servant who obeys exactly the order of her Master, (*Cosmopol. Tract. 2*), or an instrument guided by the hand of a Workman, incapable of making a mistake. This nature, or Second Cause, is a Universal Spirit, which has a vivifying and fertilizing property of the Light created in the beginning and communicated to all parts of the Macrocosm. Zoroaster and Heraclitus have called it an igneous Spirit, an invisible Fire, and "*the Soul of the World*." It is of it that Virgil speaks when he says, (*Eneid. I. 6*): from the beginning, a certain igneous spirit was infused into the heaven, the earth and sea, the moon and the Titanian, or terrestrial bodies - that is to say, the minerals and metals, to which one has given the names of planets. This Spirit gives them life and preserves them. The Soul, diffused through every body, gives movement to all the mass and to each of its parts. Whence have come all kinds of living beings, quadrupeds, birds, fishes. This igneous Spirit is the principle of their vigor; its origin is celestial, and it is communicated to them through the germ which produces them.

The order which reigns in the Universe is only a consequence of the eternal laws. All the movements of the different parts of its mass depend upon them. Nature forms, alters, and disintegrates continually, and her moderator, everywhere present, repairs continually the transformations of the work.

[23] Word derived from Greek Ὕλη, and which signifies *forest*, chaos, confusion. It is also the name given by the Alchemists to the matter of the Philosopher's Stone. – Pernety, in *Dict. Mytho-Herm.*, p. 205.

One may divide the World into three regions[24], the superior, the middle, and the inferior. The Hermetic Philosophers give to the First the name of INTELLIGIBLE, and say that it is spiritual, immortal or unalterable; it is the most perfect region.

The Middle is called CELESTIAL: it encloses bodies less perfect and a quantity of spirits. It is necessary to notice that the Philosophers do not understand by these spirits, immaterial or *angelic* spirits, but simply physical spirits, such as the igneous spirit scattered throughout the Universe; such is also the spirituality of their superior region. This region being in the middle, participates in the character of both the superior and inferior. It serves as the means to unite these two extremes, and as the canal by which the vivifying spirits which animate all the parts of the inferior region are communicated to it. It is subject only to periodical changes.

The Inferior or ELEMENTARY, contains all sublunary bodies. It receives from the two others vivifying spirits only to return them. This is why all is changed, all is corrupted, all dies; there is no generation which is not preceded by corruption; and no birth which is not followed by death.

Each region is subject to and dependent upon the one superior to it, but they act in concert. The Creator alone has the power of annihilating beings, as He alone has had the power of drawing them from nothingness. The laws of Nature do not permit that that which bears the character of being, or substance, should be subjected to annihilation; which has caused Hermès to say, (*Pymand.*), that nothing dies in this world, but that all passes from one state of being to another. Every Mixt is composed of elements, and resolves finally into these same elements, by a continual rotation, as said Lucretius:

Huic accedit uti quicque in sua corpora rursum
Dissolvat natura; neque ad nihilum interimat res.

There existed then, in the beginning, two principles: the one luminous, approaching spiritual nature; the other material and dark. The first, the principle of light, of movement and of heat; the second, the principle of shadows, of torpor and of cold, (*Cosmopol. Tract I.*); the former, active and masculine; the latter, passive and feminine. From the first comes the movement for generation in our elementary world, and from the second proceeds the alteration, whence death has taken its origin.

All movement is made by rarefaction and condensation, (*Beccher, Physica Subterranea*). Heat, the effect of sensible or insensible light, is the cause of rarefaction, and cold produces contraction or condensation. All generations, vegetations and accretions are made only by these two means; because these are the first two dispositions by which bodies were affected. Light is diffused only by rarefaction; and condensation, which produces the density of bodies, has alone arrested the progress of light, and preserved the shadows.

When Moses said that God created the heavens and the earth, he seems to have wished to speak of the two formal and material, or active and passive, principles which we have explained, and he does not appear to have understood by the earth, that arid mass which appeared after the waters were separated from it. That of which Moses speaks is the material principle of all that which exists and comprehends the globe terra-aqua-aerian. The other has taken its name from its dryness, and in order to distinguish it from the mass of waters: *et vocavit Deus aridam terram, congregationesque aquarum maria*, (*Gen., chap. I*).

The Air, Water and the Earth are only the same matter, more or less tenuous and subtilized, in proportion as it is more or less rarefied. The Air, as the principle most approaching rarefaction, is the

[24] These three divisions are identical with those adopted by the Kabbalists, who divide the Universe in three worlds: Archetypal, Astral and Elemental. E.B.

most subtle, Water comes next, and then Earth. As the object which I have, in giving these abridged principles of Natural Philosophy, is only to instruct the amateurs of Hermetism, I will not enter into the details of the formation of the stars and their movements.

Of Light and Its Effects

Light, after having acted upon the parts of the dark mass, which were nearest to it, and having rarefied them more or less in proportion to their distance, finally penetrated even to the center, in order to animate it in its entirety, to fertilize it, and to make it produce all that which the Universe presents to our eyes. Thus it pleased God to fix its natural source in the sun, yet without collecting it there entirely. It seems that God had wished to establish it as the only dispenser of light, in order that the light created by an unique God, Himself the Increate Light, should be communicated to creatures by a single agent, as if to indicate to us its first origin.

From this luminous torch all the others borrow their light and the brilliancy which they reflect upon us; because their compact matter produces in regard to us the same effect as a spherical polished mass, or a mirror on which the rays of the sun fall. We must judge of celestial bodies as of the moon, in which sight alone reveals to us solidity, and a property common to terrestrial bodies of intercepting the rays of the sun, and of producing shadow, which property belongs only to opaque bodies. One must not conclude from this that the stars and planets are not transparent bodies; since clouds, which are only vapors of water, also make a shadow intercepting the solar rays.

Some Philosophers have called the sun the soul of the world, and have supposed it placed in the middle of the Universe, as it would be easier for it to communicate everywhere its benign influences from a center. Before having received them the Earth was in a kind of idleness, or as a female without the male. As soon as it was impregnated by them, it produced immediately, not simple vegetation as formerly, but animated and living beings, animals of all species.

Thus the animals were the fruit of light, and having all the same principle, how could they, according to the common opinion, be antipathetic and contradictory? It is from their union that all bodies are formed according to their different species, and their diversity arises only from the greater or less proportion of each element in their composition.

The First Light had scattered the germs of things into the matrix which was fit for each one; that of the sun has fertilized them and made them germinate. Each individual preserves within himself a spark of that Light, which reduces germs from latency into activity. The spirits of living beings are raised of this Light, and the soul of Man is a ray, or emanation, of the Increate Light. God, that eternal, infinite, incomprehensible Light, could He manifest Himself to the world except by light? and must one be astonished if He has infused so many beauties and virtues in His image, which He has formed Himself, and in which He has established His throne: *In sole posuit tabernaculum suum*,(*Psalm 18*.)

Of Man

God in materializing Himself, to speak thus, by the Creation of the World, did not think that it was enough to have made such beautiful things, He wished to place upon it the seal of His divinity, and to manifest Himself still more perfectly by the formation of Man. To this end, He made him in His image, and in that of the World. He gave him a soul**,** a mind and a body ; and of these three things, united in the same subject, He constituted humanity.

He composed this body of a *clay* extracted from the purest substance of all created bodies. He drew his mind from all that which is most perfect in Nature, and He gave him a soul made by a kind of extension of Himself. It is Hermès who speaks: "*Mens, ò Tat, ex propriâ essentiâ Dei est. Aliqua siquidem est Dei essentia. Qualiscumque tamen ille sit, hœc ipsum sola absolutè novit. Mens itaque ab essentiœ Dei habitu non est prœcisa : Quin etiam velut diffusa, solis splendoris instar. Hœc autem mens in hominibus quidem Deus est; eâ de causâ homines dii sunt, ac ipsorum humanitas divinitati est confinis*," (*Pymand., cap.II.*) The BODY represents the sublunary world, composed of Earth and Water; it is because of this that it is composed of the dry and humid, or of bone, of flesh and of blood.

The MIND,[25] infinitely more subtle, holds the middle place between the soul and the body, and serves as a bond to unite them, because one can join two extremes only by a mean. It is this, which by its igneous virtue, vivifies and moves the body under the direction of the soul, of which it is the minister; sometimes, rebellious to its orders, it follows its own fantasies and inclinations. It represents the firmament, the constituent parts of which are infinitely more subtle than those of the Earth and Water.

Lastly, the SOUL is the image of God Himself, and the Light of Man.

The body draws its nourishment from the purest substance of the three kingdoms of Nature, which pass successively from one into the other to end in Man, who is the complement, the end and the epitome.

Having been made of Earth and Water, it can be nourished only by an analogous substance, that is to say Water and Earth, and it could not fail to resolve into them.

The mind is nourished by the Spirit of the Universe and by the quintessence of all that which constitutes it, because it has been made from it. The soul of man communicates with the divine Light from which it derives its origin.

The preservation of the body is confided to the mind. It works over the gross nourishment which we take from vegetables and animals, in the laboratories in the interior of the body. It separates the pure from the impure; it keeps and distributes, through the different circulatory systems, the quintessence analogous to that from which the body has been made, in order to increase its volume, or to maintain it**;** it rejects the impure and heterogeneous by means destined for this purpose.

It is the true ARCHEUS[26] of Nature, which van Helmont**,** (*Traité Des Maladies*,) supposes placed in the orifice of the stomach; but of which he seems not to have had a clear idea, since he has spoken of it in such a confused manner as to be almost unintelligible.[27]

This Archeus is an igneous principle, the principle of heat, of movement and of life, which animates bodies and preserves its manner of being as long as the weakness of its organs permit. It is nourished by principles analogous to itself, which it attracts continually by respiration: this is why death succeeds life almost immediately when respiration is intercepted.

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[25] What Pernety calls MIND answers to the *Astral Body* of the Kabbalists; the "*Perisprit*" of the Spiritists, equilibriating term between the material body and the pure spirit. It is the hvr Ruah, of the Kabbalah, the *Linga Sharira* of Eastern Philosophy. E.B.

[26] Physicists and particularly Spagyric Philosophers call this the Universal and Particular Agent; it is that which induces movement in Nature and causes the seeds and germs of all sublunary beings to reproduce and multiply their species.
Pernety in Dict. Myth.Herm.

[27] The Reader will discover here, that through the embarassed manner in which Pernety expresses himself here, that the ARCHEUS is that same nervous (?) force which is concentrated in the Solar Plexus, that part of our organism which is the theatre of the occult life of the initiate. E.B.

The body is by itself a principle of death, analogous to that formless, cold and dark mass, from which God formed the World. It represents shadows. The mind is derived from and participates in this matter, animated by the spirit of God, which in the beginning moved upon the waters, and which by its diffused light, infused into the mass that heat, producer of movement and life in all nature, and that fertilizing virtue, principle of generation, which furnishes to each individual the means of multiplying its species.

Infused into the womb with the germ which it animates, it works there to form and to perfect the dwelling which it is to inhabit, according to the quality of the materials furnished, the geographical conditions and the specification of matter. If the materials are of good quality, the building will be more solid, the temperament stronger and more vigorous. If they are bad, the body will be weaker, and less fit to resist the perpetual assaults which it will have to sustain as long as it will exist. If the matter is susceptible of a more perfect organization, the mind will be able to exercise its action with all the liberty and ease possible. Then the progeny who will proceed from it will be more alert, and the mind will manifest itself in the actions of life with more brilliancy. But if something is wanting, if the matter is gross and terrestrial, if this mind is weak in itself, because of its little strength or quantity, the organs will be defective, or vitiated ; the mind can only work feebly in its abode; the progeny will be more or less stupid. The soul which will be infused into it, will not be less perfect, but its minister, being able to exercise its functions only with difficulty - because of the obstacles which it meets at each step - will not appear in all its splendour and will not be able to manifest itself as it is. The cabin of a peasant, even the house of a merchant, would not announce the dwelling of a king, although a king should make his abode there. In vain will he have all the qualities required to reign gloriously, in vain will his minister be intelligent and capable of aiding his sovereign ; if the constitution of the state is bad, if they cannot command obedience, if there is no remedy, the state will not be splendid; all will go wrong, all will decline; it will go to its destruction without one being able to deny the existence of the sovereign, or to blame him for the lack of glory and splendour. One will render, even to the king and his minister, the justice which is due to them.

Thus one sees why reason is manifested in children only at a certain age, and in some sooner than in others; why, in proportion as the organs are weakened, the reason appeared to be weakened also: *Corpus quod corrumpitur aggravat animam, et terrêna inhabitatio deprimit sensum multa cogitantem*,(*Sap. I.*) A certain time is necessary for the organs to be strengthened and perfected. They are finally consumed; they fall into decay and are destroyed. Even if the state were at its highest degree of glory, if it begins to decline, if its destruction is inevitable, the king and his minister, with all the care and aptitudes possible, will be able, at most, only to make from time to time efforts, which will manifest their talents, but which will not suffice to arrest the ruin of the state.

Howsoever little an intelligent man looks into himself, and makes the analysis of his composition, he will soon recognize these three principles of his humanity, really distinct, but united in a single individual, (*Nicolas Flamel, Explanation of Figures, Chap. 7.*)

Let the pretended strong, minds, the materialists, ignorant and little accustomed to reflect seriously, consider *themselves* in good faith, and follow step by step this little detail of Man, and they will soon recognize their mistake and the weakness of their principles. They will see that their ignorance causes them to confound the king with the minister, and the subjects, the Soul with the mind and the body. Finally, that a prince is responsible both for his own actions and those of his minister, when the latter acts by his order, or with his consent and approbation.

Solomon confounds the errors of the materialists of his time, and teaches us at the same time that they reasoned as foolishly as those of our day:-

"They have, said he, (*Sap. c. 2*), spoken as madmen who think evil, and have said:-

"Our Life is short and tedious, and in the death of a man there is no remedy: neither was there any man known to have returned from the grave.

"For we are born at all adventure: and we shall be hereafter as though we had never been; for the breath in our nostrils is as *smoke,* and a little *spark,* in the moving of our heart:

"Which, being extinguished, our body shall be turned into ashes, and our spirit shall vanish as the soft air . . . .

"Come on**,** therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present: and let us speedily use the creatures like as in youth . . . .

"Such things they did imagine, and were deceived: for their own wickedness hath blinded them.

"As for the mysteries of God, they knew them not: neither hoped they for the wages of righteousness, nor discerned a reward for blameless souls.

"For God created man to be eternal, and made him to be an image of *his own eternity*."

One sees clearly in this chapter the distinction between mind and soul. The former is an igneous vapour, a spark, a fire, which gives animal life and movement to bodies, and vanishes in the air when the organs are destroyed. The Soul is the principle of the actions of the will and of reason, and survives the destruction of the body and the dissolution of the mind.

Consequently this chapter explains these words of the same author, (*Ecclesiast. chap. III, v. 19*): "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man has no preeminence over a beast: for all is vanity." This igneous vapour, this spark of light animates the body of Man and puts in play all its resources. In vain will one seek for the particular place where the soul makes its residence, while it commands as a master. It is the particular abode of this spirit which it would be necessary to seek; but vainly would one wish to determine it. All the parts of the body are animated by it; it is diffused everywhere. If the pressure of the pineal gland,[28] or the callous body, arrests the action of this spirit, it is not because it dwells there in particular, but because the resources which the spirit employs to put in play the machine, end there mediately or immediately. Their action is hindered by this pressure; and the spirit, although diffused everywhere, can no longer make them act.

The tenuity of this igneous vapour is too great to be apparent to the senses, except by its effects. The minister of God and of the Soul in Man, it follows in the animals only the impressions and laws which the Creator has imposed upon it in order to animate them, to give them the movement conformable to their species. It accommodates itself to all, and is specified in man and the animals according to their organs. Whence comes the conformity which is noticeable in a great number of the actions of men and beasts. God uses it as an instrument by means of which the animals see, taste, smell and hear. He has constituted it under His orders the guide of their actions. He specifies it in each of them according to the different functions which it has pleased Him to give to their organs. Whence the difference of their characters, and their different manners of acting, yet always uniform as to each one in particular, taking always the same road to arrive at the same aim, when no obstacles are found in it.

[28] Descartes placed the seat of the soul in the brain, in the small gland *Glandula pinealis,* situated between the *Optic Thalimi* and *Corpora quadrigemina*. E.B.

This spirit, which is usually called instinct, when animals are spoken of, determined and almost absolutely specified in each animal, is not so in Man, because the spirit of Man is the epitome and quintessence of all the spirits of animals. So man has not a particular character which is peculiar to him, as each animal has: every dog is faithful, every lamb is gentle, every lion is bold, every cat is treacherous; but man is all at the same time, faithful, indiscreet, treacherous, intemperate, gentle, furious, bold, timid, courageous; circumstances, or reason, decide always what he is at each instant of life, and one never sees in any animal those varieties which one finds in Man, because he alone possesses the germ of all. Each man would develop it, and would convert it from potentiality to actuality as the animals, when the occasion would present itself, if this spirit was not subordinated to another substance superior to itself. The Soul, purely spiritual, holds the reins. It guides the spirit, and conducts it in all its deliberate actions. Sometimes it does not give it time to communicate its orders, and to exercise its empire. It acts of itself; it puts in play the resources of the body, and Man then acts simply as an animal. These actions one calls *first impulse*,[29] and those which one makes without reflection, such as coming, going, eating, when one is worried by some serious affair which occupies him entirely.

The animal obeys always, infallibly, his natural inclination, because it tends only to the preservation of its transient, mortal existence, in which lies all its happiness and welfare. But Man does not always follow this inclination; because, while he is disposed to preserve that which is mortal in himself, he feels also another desire which disposes him to work for the felicity of his immortal part, to which he is certain that he owes the preference.

Thus God has created Man in His image, and has formed him as the abrégé of all His works, and the most perfect of material beings. One calls him rightly: *Microcosm*. He is the center where all ends: he contains the quintessence of the entire Universe. He participates in the virtues and properties of all individuals. He has the fixedness of the metals and minerals, the vegetability of the plants, the sensitive faculties of the animals, and besides, an intelligent and immortal Soul. The Creator has placed in him, as in the box of Pandora, all the gifts and virtues of things superior and inferior. He finished His work of creation by the formation of Man, because it was necessary to create all the Universe in stupendous proportions before reducing it in hominal limits. And as the Supreme Being, Himself without beginning, was yet the beginning of all, He wished to place the seal of His work on an individual, who, not being, able to be without beginning, was at least without end as Himself.

Therefore let not man dishonor the Model of which he is the image. He should think that he has not been created to live solely according to his animality, but according to his humanity, properly speaking. Let him drink, let him eat; but let him pray, let him subdue his passions, let him work for eternal life; in this he will differ from the animals, and will be really a man.

The body of Man is subject to change and entire dissolution, as other composites. The action of heat produces this change in the manner of being of all sublunary individuals, because their mass being a composition of parts more material, less pure, less connected, and more heterogeneous than those of the stars or planets, is more susceptible to the effects of rarefaction.

This alteration is in its progression a real corruption, which is made successively, and which, by degrees, leads to a new generation, or new manner of being; for the harmony of the Universe consists in a different and gradual interior formation of the matter which constitutes it.

This change of form takes place only in the bodies of this inferior world. The cause is not, as some have thought, the contradiction or opposition of the qualities of matter, but its own essence, dark and

[29] For the study of these involuntary acts, immediate result of *Reflex Action*, see the remarkable works of Dr. Papus: *Traité de Physiologie Synthétique, Traité Méthodique de Science Occulte*, etc.

purely passive, which, not having in itself power to acquire a permanent form, is obliged to receive these different and transient forms of the principle which animates it; always according to the end which has pleased God to give to *genera* and *species*.

To supply this original defect of matter, from which even the body of Man has been formed, God placed Adam in a Terrestrial Paradise, so that he could combat and conquer this caducity by the use of the fruit of the Tree of Life, of which he was deprived, in punishment for his disobedience, and he was condemned to undergo the fate of other individuals whom God had not favored with this aid.

The *Prima Materia* from which all has been made, which serves as a basis for all the composites, seems to have been so mingled and identified in them, after it had received its form from Light, that it could not be separated from them without causing their destruction. Nature has left us an example of this confused and formless mass, in that *dry water*, which does not moisten, which may be seen rising from mountains, and which exhale from some lakes, impregnated with the germs of things, and which evaporates at the least heat. This dry water is that which forms the basis of the *Ars Magna*, according to all Philosophers. He who would know how to unite this volatile matter with its male, to extract from it the Elements, and to separate them philosophically, could flatter himself, so says d'Espagnet, (*Enchirid. Phys. restit. can. 49.*), that he had in his possession the most precious secret of nature, and even the epitome of the essence of the heavens.

Of the Elements[30]

Thus Nature employed from the beginning only two simple principles, from which all that which exists was made, namely, the passive Prima Materia, and the Luminous Agent which gave it form. The Elements proceeded from their action, as secundary principles, from the different mixture of which was formed a *Secunda Materia*[31] subject to the vicissitudes of generation and corruption.

In vain will one imagine to be able by the aid of chemical art to arrive at and separate the Elements absolutely simple and distinct from each other. The human mind does not even know them. Those to which the profane gives the name of elements, are not really simple and homogeneous: they are so mingled and united as to be inseparable.

The perceptible bodies of the earth, the water and the air, which in their spheres are really distinct, are not the first and simple elements which Nature employs in her different generations. They seem to be only the matrix of others. The simple Elements are imperceptible, until their union forms a dense matter, which we call body, to which are joined the gross elements as integral parts. *Ex insensibilibus namque omnia confiteare principiis constare*, (*Lucret. lib. 2*). The elements which constitute our globe are too crude and impure to form a perfect generation. Unseasonably the chemists and physicists attribute to them the properties of the parent-Elements: the *Prima Materia* and Luminous Agent. The latter are as the soul of the composites, the former only the body. Art is ignorant of the first, and would work in vain to resolve the Mixts into them: this is the work of Nature alone.

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[30] In the Alchemical Theory, says Albert Poisson, the four Elements, not any more than the three Principles, represent particular substances; they are simply states of matter, simple modalities. Water is synonymous with the liquid state, Earth with the solid; Air with the gaseous and Fire with that of a very subtle gaseous state, such as a gas expanded by the action of heat . . . Moreover, Elements represent, by extension, physical qualities such as heat, (Fire); dryness and solidity, (Earth); moisture and fluidity, (Water); cold and subtility, (Air); Zosimus gives to their ensemble the name of *Tetrasomy*.

(Théories et Sumboles des Alchimistes.)

[31] Secunda Materia - or *Seed in Metals*.

On these principles the ancient Philosophers distinguished only three Elements, and imagined the Universe governed by three gods, children of Saturn, whom they called sons of Heavens and Earth. The Egyptians, from whom the ancient Greek Philosophers derived their systems, regarded Vulcan as the father of Saturn, if we believe Diodorus of Sicily. Doubtless this is the reason which led them not to place Fire in the number of Elements. But as they supposed that the Fire of Nature, the principle of elementary Fire, had its source in the Heavens, they gave the government of it to Jupiter; and, as a scepter and distinctive mark, they armed him with a thunderbolt with three darts, and gave him for a wife his sister Juno, whom they imagined to preside over the Air. Neptune was placed over the sea, and Pluto over the infernal regions. The poets adopted these ideas of the Philosophers, who, knowing Nature perfectly, saw fit to make only a trine division of it, persuaded that the accidents, which distinguish the inferior region of the air from the superior, did not form a sufficient reason to make a real distinction. They saw in them only a difference of dry and humid, *siccum* and *humidum*, of heat and cold united; which made them imagine the two sexes in the same Element.

Each of the three brothers had a three-pointed scepter as a mark of his empire, and to indicate that each Element, as we see it, is a composition of three. They were, properly speaking, brothers, since they were derived from the same principle, sons of the Heavens and the Earth, that is to say, the first animate matter from which all has been made.

Pluto is called the god of riches and the master of the infernal regions, because the earth is the source of riches, and because nothing torments men as does the thirst for wealth and ambition.

It is not more difficult to apply the rest of the Fable to Physics. Several authors have interested themselves in this matter, and have demonstrated that the ancients proposed only to instruct by the invention of these fables. The Hermetic Philosophers, who claim to be the true disciples and imitators of Nature, made a double application of these principles: seeing in the processes and progress of the *Ars Magna* the operations of Nature, as in a mirror; they no longer distinguished the one from the other, and explained them in the same manner. Then they compared all that which takes place in the *Magistery*, to the successive stages of the creation of the Universe, by a certain analogy which they thought to remark in them. Is it surprising that all their fictions have had these two things for an object? If one reflected, one would not find much of the ridiculous in their myths. If they personified all, it was to render their ideas more obvious; and one would soon recognize that the ridiculous and licentious actions, which they attributed to these imaginary gods, were only the operations of Nature, which we see daily without noticing them. Wishing to explain themselves only by allegories, could they suppose things done otherwise and by other actors? Does not our ignorance of Physics give us the foolish privilege of mocking them, and imputing to them ridicule, which they could perhaps easily turn upon us if they were on the earth, to speak in the fashion of the present century? The analysis of the composites, or Mixts, gives us only the *siccum* and *humidum*; whence one must conclude that there are only two perceptible Elements in the composition of bodies, namely, Earth and Water. But the same experiment shows us that two others are concealed in them. The Air is too subtle to strike our eyes: hearing and touch are the only senses which demonstrate to us its existence. As to the Fire of Nature, it is impossible for Art to manifest it, except by its effects.

Of the Earth

The Earth is naturally cold, because of its participating more of the nature of the opaque and dark Primal Matter. This cold makes the body, heavier and denser; and this density renders it less penetrable to Light, which is the principle of heat. It has been created in the midst of the waters, with which it is always mixed; and the Creator seems to have made it dry on its surface, only to render it suitable for the abode of Vegetables and animals.

The Creator has made the Earth spongy, so that the Air, Water and Fire might have free access, and that the interior Fire, which was infused into it by the spirit of God before the formation of the Sun, (*Cosmopol. Tract 4*), could press from the center to the surface by its pores the virtues of the Elements, and exhale those humid vapors, which corrupt the germs of things by a slight putrefaction, and prepare them for generation. These germs thus prepared receive the celestial and vivifying heat, and even attracted by a magnetic love, the germ develops, and the seed produces its fruit.

The heat peculiar to the Earth, is fit only for corruption. Its moisture weakens it, and could produce nothing unless aided by the celestial heat, pure and without mixture, which leaves to generation, by exciting the action of the internal fire, by developing it, by expanding it, and by drawing it, to speak thus, from the center of the seed, where it lies torpid and concealed. These two heats by their homogeneity work in concert for the production and preservation of the Mixts.

All cold is contrary to production. When a matter is of this nature, it becomes passive, and is fit for production only as long as it is aided and corrected by an outside force. The Author of Nature, designing the Earth to be the womb of the composites, warms it consequently, continually by the heat of the Celestial and Central Fire, and joins to it the humid nature of Water; so that, aided by the two principles of generation, the warm and the humid, it is not sterile, and becomes the Vase in which are conceived all the generations, (*Cosmo. ibid*). One says for this reason, that the Earth contains the other Elements.

It can be divided into two classes, the pure and the impure. The first is the basis of all the composites, and produces all by the mixture of Water and the action of Fire. The second is the garment of the first; it enters as an integral part in the composition of individuals.

The pure is animated by a Fire which vivifies the Mixts, and preserves them in their manner of being, as long as the cold of the impure does not rule, or as long as it is not too much excited and tyrannized over by the artificial and elementary fire, its fratricide. That which is visible in the Earth is *fixed*, and that which is invisible is *volatile*.

Of Water

The density of Water holds the middle place between that of the Air and that of the Earth. It is the *Menstrum*[32] of Nature, and the vehicle of the germs. It is a volatile body, which seems to flee from the attacks of fire, and evaporates at the slightest heat. It is susceptible of all forms, and more changeable than Proteus. Water is a mercury, which, partaking sometimes of the nature of a terra-aqueous body, sometimes of that of an aqua-aerian body, attracts and seeks the virtues of things superior and inferior. It becomes, by this means, the messenger of the gods and their mediator; through it is maintained the commerce between the heavens and the earth.

[32] Or *Solvent* - “One has also given the name of *Menstrum*, however improperly, to Vegetable and Metallic Waters, which are regarded as the feminine principle of these two reigns, and in which is placed the matter to be dissolved.” Pernety, *Dict. Mytho-Herm.*, p292.

An unctious phlegm is diffused in Water, (Mémoire de l' Académie de Berlin). M. Eller has recognized it in his observations: "A water," said he, "very pure and free from all heterogeneous parts, (in the manner of the common chemist), can suffice for vegetation. It furnishes the earth, the basis of the solidity of plants: it diffuses in it that inflammable, or oily part, which one finds in it."

Let us take some earth, after having been washed in lye and parched by fire, in which we are certain that there is no germ of plants, let us expose it to the air in a vase, and let us be careful to water it with rain water, it will produce little plants in great number; proof that it is the vehicle of germs.

As Water is of a nature closely approaching that of the First Matter of the World, it becomes easily its symbol, or image. The chaos, whence all was derived, was like a vapor, or a humid substance, similar to a subtle smoke. Light having rarefied it, the heavens were formed of the most subtilized portion; the Air of that which was less so; the elementary Water of that which was a little more terrestrial; and the Earth, of the densest, and as fæces, (*Raymond Lully*, *Testam*, *Anc. Theor*.). Therefore Water partaking of the nature of the Air and Earth, is placed in the middle. Lighter than the Earth and heavier than Air, it is always mixed with both. At the least rarefaction it seems to abandon the Earth to take the nature of the Air; it is condensed by the least cold, it quits the Air, and unites itself with the Earth.

The nature of Water is rather humid than cold, because it is thinner and more open to the Light than the Earth. Water has preserved the humidity of the Prima Materia and of chaos; the Earth has retained its cold.

The siccity is an effect of cold as of heat, and moisture is the principal subject on which heat and cold act. When the latter is powerful, it condenses the moisture; we see it in snow, ice and hail. From this comes the fall of leaves in autumn. If the cold increases, winter succeeds, the moisture in the plants congeals, the pores close, the stalk becomes weak through lack of nourishment: they finally wither. If the winter is severe, it bears the dryness even to the roots: it attacks the *vito-humidum*; and the plants perish. How can one say after this that cold is a quality of Water, since it is its enemy, and since Nature does not suffer that an Element act upon itself. One speaks, it seems to me, more correctly, when one says that the cold has *burned* the plants. Cold and heat burn equally, but in a different manner; heat by expanding, and cold by contracting the parts of the Mixts.

That which Water presents to us visibly is volatile; its interior is fixed. The Air tempers its humidity. That which the Air receives from Fire, it communicates to Water, which in turn communicates it to the Earth.

One may divide this Element into three parts; the *pure*, the *purer*, and the *purest*, (*Cosmopol., of Water*); from the latter the heavens have been made; from the purer, the Air; and the simply pure has remained in its sphere: it is the ordinary Water, which forms only one globe with the Earth. These two Elements united make all, because they contain the two others. From their union is born a mud, which Nature uses to form all bodies. This mud is the Matter from which will evolve all generations. It is a kind of chaos, in which the Elements are confounded. Our first father has been formed from it, as well as all the generations which have followed him. From the sperm and the menstrum is formed a mud, and from this mud an animal.

In the production of vegetation the seeds putrefy and change into a slime before germinating. It is then consolidated and grows into a vegetable body. In the generation of the metals, *Sulphur* and *Mercury* resolve into a viscous Water, which is a true slime. The decoction coagulates this Water, fixes it more or less, and from it results the minerals and the metals. In the Sophic Work, one first forms a slime of two substances, or principles, after having purified them. As the four Elements are found in them, the Fire preserves the Earth from submersion and entire dissolution: the Air maintains

the Fire; the Water preserves the Earth against the violent attacks of the Fire; and acting thus in concert upon each other, there results from them a harmonious whole, which composes what is called the *Philosopher's Stone*, or the *Microcosm*.

Of the Air

The Air is light, and is not visible; but it contains a substance which corporifies itself, which becomes fixed. Its nature is midway between that which is above and that which is below it; for this reason it takes easily the qualities of its neighbours. Whence come the changes which we experience in the low regions, those of cold, as well as those of heat.

The Air is the receptacle of the germs of all, the sieve of Nature, by which the powers and influences of other bodies are transmitted to us. It penetrates all. It is a very subtle smoke; the fit subject of light and of shadows, of day and night. A body always full, transparent, and most susceptible of foreign qualities, as well as most ready to abandon them. The Philosophers call it *Spirit* when they treat of the *Ars Magna*. It contains the vital spirits of all bodies; it is the aliment of fire, of vegetation and of animals, who die when deprived of it. Nothing would be born in the world without its penetrating and altering force; and nothing can resist its rarefaction.

The superior region of the Air, next to the moon, is pure without being igneous; as has been long taught in the schools, according to the opinion of some of the ancients. Its purity is contaminated by none of the vapours which rise from the lower region.

The middle region receives the most subtle sulphurous exhalation, free from the gross vapours. They wander in it, and are set on fire from time to time by their movements and the different shocks which they undergo among themselves. These are the different meteors which we perceive in the middle region.

In the lower region, the vapours of the earth rise and mingle. They are condensed by the cold and fall by their own weight. Thus Nature purifies Water to render it fit for her productions. This is why one distinguishes the superior waters from the inferior. The latter are near the earth, they are supported upon it as on their foundation and form only one globe with it. The superior waters occupy the lower region of the air, where they are raised in the form of vapours and clouds, and where they wander at the will of the winds. The air is full of them at all times; but they are manifest to our sight only in part, when they are condensed into clouds. This is the consequence of creation. God separated the waters of the firmament from those which were below. It should not be surprising that all the waters, united, have been able to cover the entire surface of the earth, and to cause an universal deluge, since they covered it before God had separated them, (*Gen. chap. V.*). These humid masses which hover over our heads are like travellers, who go to collect the riches of all countries, and return to benefit their native land.

Of Fire

Some of the ancients placed Fire as a fourth Element, in the highest region of the Air, because they regarded it as the lightest and most subtle. But the Fire of Nature does not differ from the Celestial Fire; this is why Moses makes no mention of it in Genesis, because he had said that Light was created on the first day.

The fire which we use ordinarily is partly natural and partly artificial. The Creator has placed in the sun an igneous spirit, the principle of movement and of gentle heat, such as is necessary to Nature for

her operations. It communicates it to all bodies, and by exciting and developing the Fire which is innate in them, it preserves the principle of generation and of life. Each individual partakes of it more or less. He who seeks in Nature another element of Fire, is ignorant of what the sun and light are.

It is placed in the *Moist Radical* as its proper seat. With animals it seems to have established its chief domicile in the heart, which communicates it to all parts, as the sun does to all the Universe.

The Fire of Nature is her first agent. It reduces the germs from potentiality to actuality. As soon as it no longer acts, all apparent movement and all vital action ceases. The principle of movement is light, and movement is the cause of heat. This is why the absence of the sun and of light has such a great effect upon bodies. Heat penetrates to the interior of the most opaque and hardest substances, and animates the hidden and torpid nature. Light penetrates only transparent bodies, and its property is to manifest the perceptible accidents of the composites. Thus the sun is the first natural and universal agent.

In departing from the sun light strikes the dense bodies, the celestial as well as the terrestrial; it places their faculties in movement, carries them with it, reflects them and diffuses them in the upper Air as well as in the lower. Air having a disposition to mix with the Water and the Earth, becomes the vehicle of these faculties, and communicates them to the bodies which are formed of them, or which are by analogy most susceptible of them. These are the faculties which are called *influences*. Many natural philosophers deny their existence, because they do not know them.

One divides Fire into three kinds, the Celestial, the Terrestrial, or Simple, and the Artificial. The first is the principle of the other two and is divided into Universal and Particular. The Universal diffused everywhere, excites and puts in movement the forces of bodies; it warms and preserves the germs of things infused into our globe, destined to serve as their makers. It develops the particular Fire; it mixes the elements and gives form to matter.

The particular Fire is innate, and implanted in each mixture with its germ. It acts little, except when excited; it then does, in the part of the Universe, what the sun, its father, does in the whole.

Everywhere there is production, there must be Fire, as the efficient cause. The ancients thought as we:

Inde hominum pecudumque genus, vitæque volantum,
Et quæ marmoreo fert monstra sub æquore pontus.
Igneus est illis vigor, et cælestis origo
Semenibus. *Virg. Æneid. l. 6.*

But it is surprising that they have admitted a contradiction between Fire and Water, since there is no Water without Fire and since they always act in concert in the generations of individuals.

Every discerning eye must, on the contrary, remark a love, a sympathy which causes the preservation of the Universe, the cube of Nature, and the strongest bond, to unite the Elements and the superior with the inferior things. This love is, to speak thus, what we should call Nature, the Minister of the Creator, who employs the Elements to execute His will according to the laws which He has imposed upon them. Everything is done in the World in peace and unity, which cannot be an effect of hatred and contradiction. Nature would not be so like to herself in the formation of individuals of the same species, if all was not done in concert. We would see only monsters proceed from the heterogeneous germs of fathers perpetually hostile, constantly at war with each other. Do we see the animals work through hatred and contradiction for the propagation of their species? Let us judge the other operations of Nature by this: her laws are simple and uniform.

Let philosophy cease to attribute the alteration, the corruption, the decay of the Mixts to a pretended antagonism of the elements; it is found in the penury and weakness peculiar to the First Matter; for in chaos *Frigida non pugnabant calidis, humentia siccis*. All was cold and humid, qualities which belong to Matter, considered as feminine. The warm and the dry, masculine and formal qualities, have come to it from Light, from which it has received its forms. Thus it is only after the retreat of the Waters that the Earth was called arid or dry.

We see continually that heat and dryness give form to everything. A potter would never succeed in making a vase, if dryness does not give to the clay a certain degree of adhesion and solidity. If the earth is too moist, too soft, it is a mud, which has no determined form.

Such was chaos, before the heat, or Light, had rarefied it, and caused the evaporation of a part of its moisture. The parts drew closer together, the clay of chaos became earth, and an earth of a consistency fit to serve as the material in the formation of all the composites in Nature.

Thus heat and dryness are only accidental qualities of the First Matter. It has been endowed with them on receiving form, (*Genesis, Chap. I*). Thus it is not said in Genesis that God found chaos very good, as He did Light and other things. The abyss seems to have acquired a degree of perfection, only when it began to produce. Confusion, lack of form, and opaque density, a coldness, a crude moisture, and powerlessness, were its characteristics; qualities which indicate an ill body, inclined to corruption. It has preserved something of this original fault, and has infected with it all the bodies which have proceeded from it, to be placed in this lower region. This is why all the composites have a transient manner of being, in regard to the determination of their individual and specific form.

Howsoever opposed light and shadow may seem to be, since they have concurred, the one as agent, the other as patient, in the formation of the Universe, they have made by this agreement of their contrary qualities, an almost unalterable treaty of peace, which has passed into their homogeneous family of the Elements, whence has resulted the peaceful generation of all individuals. Nature is pleased in combination and does all by proportion, weight and measure, and not by contradiction.

Est modus in rebus sunt certi denique fines,
Quos ultra citraque nequit consistere rectum.
- Hor. Art. Poët.

Each element has, peculiar to itself, one of the qualities of which we speak. Warmth, dryness, cold and moisture are the four wheels which Nature employs to produce the slow, graduated and circular movement which she seems to affect in the formation of all her works.

Fire, her universal agent, is the principle of elementary fire. The latter is nourished by all fat matters, because all that which is fat is of a humid and aerial nature. Although, externally, it may appear dry to us, as sulphur, gunpowder, etc., experience teaches us that this exterior conceals a fat, oily moisture, which is resolved by the action of heat.

Those who have imagined that it was formed in the air principle of hard bodies such as aerolites, have been mistaken, if they have regarded them as terrestrial bodies. It is a substance which belongs to the gross element of Water: a fat, viscous humour, enclosed in the clouds as in a furnace, where it condensed and mixed with the sulphurous exhalations, which are warm and very inflammable. The air, which is too much compressed by this condensation, is rarefied by heat, and produces the same effect as gunpowder in a bomb: the vessel breaks, the fire diffused in the air, freed from its bonds by this movement, produces that light and noise, which often startle the most intrepid.

Our artificial and common fire has properties exactly contrary to the Fire of Nature, although derived from it. It is the enemy of all production; it is maintained only by the ruin of bodies; it is

nourished only by rapine; it reduces all to ashes, and destroys all that which the other forms. It is a parricide; the greatest enemy of Nature; and if we did not know how to oppose obstacles to its fury, it would destroy all. Is it surprising that the "broilers"[33] see all perish in their hands, their property and health vanish in smoke, and useless ashes as their only resource?

M. Stahl is not the first, as M. Pott states, who has given reasonable and connected ideas as to the substance of Fire which is found in bodies; but he is the first who has reasoned concerning it under the name of *Phlogiston*[34]. One has seen the sentiment of the Hermetic Philosophers on this subject. It is only necessary to open their books to be convinced that they know this agent of Nature perfectly; and that M. Pott states unseasonably that the authors anterior to M. Stahl lost themselves in continual obscurity and innumerable contradictions. Perhaps he speaks only of the common chemists and physicists; but in that case he should have made an exception of the Hermetic Chemists, whom he has doubtless read, and whom he has so happily met, in his *Treatise on Fire and Light*, printed with the French translation of his *Lithogeognosia*. M. Stahl had studied them carefully. He furnishes a proof of this, not only by having reasoned as they on this matter, but by the great number of quotations which he has made from them in his Treatise entitled: *Fundamenta Chemiæ dogmaticæ et experimentalis*. He gives to Mercury the name *Dry Water*, name which the Hermetic Philosophers give to theirs. Basil Valentin, Philalethes, and several others, are quoted in this respect. He even distinguishes the common chemist from the Hermetic Chemist, (*part I,. page 124*), by naming the first *Physici communes*, and the second *Chymici alii*. In the same part of the same work, (*page 2*), he says that Isaac of Holland, Arnaud de Villeneuve, Raymond Lully, Basil Valentin, Trithéme, Paracelsus, etc., have made themselves commendable in Chemical Art.

Far from scorning and rejecting as faults, as do so many others, all that these authors say, this able man contents himself with speaking as they, and says, (*p. 183*), that they have expressed themselves in enigmas and allegories, in order to conceal their secret from the people, and that they seem to have affected contradiction only to place ignorant readers upon the wrong track. He enlarges still more on this matter, (*p.* 219) where he calls the Hermetic Chemists by the name of Philosophers. One can employ this denomination after such a great man. We will have occasion to speak of Mr. Pott, in treating of Light and its effects.

The proximity of the Water and the Earth causes them to be almost always mingled. The Water dilutes the Earth; the Earth thickens the Water; from them is formed clay. If this mixture is exposed to a lively heat, each visible element returns to its sphere, and the form of the body is destroyed.

Placed between the Earth and the Air, Water is really the cause of the revolutions, the disorder, the tumult, and the ruin which we remark in the air and the earth. It obscures the air by black and dangerous vapours, it inundates the earth: it carries corruption into both, and by its abundance or scarcity, it disturbs the order of the seasons and of Nature. Finally, it is the cause of as many misfortunes as benefits.

Some of the ancients have said that the sun presided especially over Fire, and the moon over Water, because they regarded the sun as the source of the Fire of Nature, and the moon as the principle of moisture. This has caused Hippocrates to say, (*Lib. I, de Diœtâ.*), that the elements of Fire and of Water could do all, because they contained all.

[33] Quack Alchemists.

[34] Fixed Fire, Fire inherent to bodies. It is the inflammable matter, or Sulphur-priniciple of substances . . . This quality is found in all the beings in Nature. It abounds in the fatty or oily parts of the animal, these parts the most susceptible of inflammation. M. Wipacher, (*Dissertation imprimée parmi les Eléments de Chymie de Boerhave*), regards the animal spirits as an igneous matter, to which he gives the name of *Automatic Phlogiston*. Pernety, *Dict. Mytho-Herm.* P.281.

Of the Operations of Nature

Sublimation, distillation and concoction are three instruments or methods of operating which Nature employs to perfect her works. By the first she throws off the superfluous moisture, which would smother the Fire, and hinder its action in the earth, its matrix.

By distillation she returns to the earth the moisture of which vegetation, or heat, have deprived it. Sublimation is made by the elevation of vapours in the air, where they are condensed into clouds. The second is made by rain and dew. Fair weather succeeds rain, and rain fair weather, alternately; a continual rain would inundate everything: perpetual fair weather would wither all. Rain falls drop by drop, because if poured down too abundantly it would destroy all, as a gardener who would water his grains by bucket full. Thus Nature distributes her benefits with weight, measure and proportion.

Concoction is a digestion of the crude humours instilled in the bowels of the Earth, a ripening, and a conversion of this humour into food by means of its secret fire.

These three operations are so connected, that the end of one is the beginning of the other. The aim of sublimation is to convert a heavy thing into a light one; and exhalation into vapour; to reduce a thick and impure substance, and to despoil it of its fæces;[35] to cause these vapours to assume the virtues and properties of superior things; and finally to free the Earth of a superfluous humour which would hinder its productions.

Scarcely are these vapours sublimated, when they are condensed into rain, and spiritual and invisible though they were, they become a moment after a dense and aqueous body, to fall again on the Earth and to soak it with the celestial nectar by which it has been impregnated during its abode in the air. As soon as the Earth has received it, Nature works to digest and to ripen it.

Each animal, the lowest worm, is a little world in which all these things take place. If man seeks the world outside of himself, he will find it everywhere. The Creator has made an infinity of them from the same matter; their form alone is different. Thus humility becomes Man, and glory belongs to God only.

Water contains a ferment, a spirit, a life, by which it has become impregnated while wandering through the air, which proceeds from the superior natures to the inferior, and which is finally deposited in the bosom of the Earth. This ferment is a germ of life, without which men, animals and vegetables could not live and could not produce. Everything in Nature breathes; and man does not live by bread alone, but by this aerial spirit which he continually inhales.

God and Nature, His minister, alone know how to command the primal material elements of bodies. Art could not approach them. But the three, which result from them, become sensible in the resolution of the Mixts. Chemists name them *Sulphur, Salt and Mercury*.[36] These are the elements *principied*. Mercury is formed by the mixture of Water and Earth; Sulphur, of Earth and Air; Salt, of Air and Water condensed. The Fire of Nature is added to these as a formal principle. Mercury is

[35] Which Sir Ripley calls *Terra damnata*, it is also designated as *Caput Mortuum*. They are the heterogenous parts of a Composite, those which remain from the body after the elimination of its pure philosophical elements. E.B.

[36] *Sulphur* in a metal represents its colour, combustability, its faculty of attacking other metals, its hardness.

Mercury its brilliancy, volatility, fusibility, malleability.

Salt mean uniting Sulphur and Mercury. - Sulphur, Mercury, Salt are consequently abstract words serving to designate the *ensemble* of properties.

F. Jollivet-Castelot: *Comment on devient Alchimiste*, Paris, 1897.

The Universal Sulphur is invariably considered as the father. To a certain point of view, Mercury is the mother, and Salt the child.

Stanislas de Guaïta: La Clef de la Magie Noire, p. 727.

composed of an oily viscous Earth and a limpid Water; Sulphur of very dry, very subtle Earth, mixed with the moisture of the Air; Salt of a thick, ponderous Earth and a crude Air which finds itself entangled with it. (See the *Physique Souterraine*, by Beccher).

Democritus[37] has said that all the Mixts were composed of atoms; this belief seems not to be far from the truth, when we notice what reason dictates and experience demonstrates to us. This philosopher, as the others, has verified, under this obscure manner of explaining himself, the true mixture of the Elements, which in order to be conformable to the operations of Nature, must be made intimately, or, as we say, *per minima et actu indivisibilia corpuscula*. Without this the parts would not make a continuous whole. The Mixts are resolved into a very subtle vapour by artificial distillation; and is not Nature a more skilful workman than the most experienced man? This is all that Democritus has wished to say.

Of the General Aspects of the Mixts

We notice three manners of being, (*Cosmop. Nov. lum. Chem. Tr. 7*), which constitute three genera, or three classes, called *Kingdoms*, the Animal, the Vegetable and the Mineral. Minerals are produced in the earth alone; vegetables have their roots in the earth, and rise in the water and the air; animals are born in the air, the water and the earth; and air is a life-principle of all.

Whatsoever different the Mixts appear to be as to their exterior form, they do not differ in principle, (*Cosmop. Tract. 2*); the Earth and Water serve as a basis for all, and the Air enters into their composition only as an instrument, as does Fire. The Light acts upon the Air, the Air on the Water, the Water on the Earth. Water often becomes the instrument of mixture in works of Art, but this mixture is only superficial; we see it in bread, bricks, etc. There is another intimate mixtion which Beccher calls Central, (*Phys. sub. sect. I., ch. 4*). It is that one by which the Water is so mixed with the Earth that they can not be separated without destroying the form of the Mixt. We will not enter into the detail of the different degrees of this cohesion, as we wish to be brief. All this can be seen in the work just quoted.

Of the Differences between the Three Kingdoms

The Mineral

We say ordinary of minerals that they exist, and not that they live, as we say of animals and vegetables; nevertheless we may say that the metals derive life in some manner from the minerals, either because in their generation there is, so to speak, a union of male and female under the name of Sulphur and Mercury, which by fermentation, circulation and continuous concoction, are purified by the aid of the Salt in Nature, and finally are formed into a mass which we call metals; or because the perfect metals contain the principle of life, or innate Fire, which become weak and without movement under the hard exterior which encloses it; a principle which is concealed there as a treasure, until being freed by a philosophical solution of this exterior, it is developed and exalted by a vegetative movement, to the highest degree of perfection which Art can give it.

The Vegetable

[37] Greek Mystagogue and Alchemist, born in Thrace 460 B. C., founder of the *atomic system*.

A vegetative soul or spirit animates plants; by it they grow and multiply. But they are deprived of the feeling and movement of animals. Their germs are hermaphrodite, although naturalists have remarked two sexes in almost all vegetables. The vegetative and incorruptible spirit is developed in the fermentation and putrefaction of the germs. When the grain decays in the earth without germinating, this spirit joins its sphere again.

The Animal

Animals have, above minerals and vegetables, a sensitive soul, the principle of their life and movement. They are, one may say, the complement of Nature as far as sublunary beings are concerned. God has distinguished and separated the two sexes in this kingdom, so that from two there should come a third. Thus in the most perfect things is manifested more perfectly the image of the Trinity.

Man is the sovereign prince of this lower world. All his faculties are admirable. The troubles which rise in his mind, his agitations, his anxieties are as the winds, the lightnings, the thunders, the whirlwinds and meteors which take place in the Macrocosm. His heart, his blood, all his body even, are agitated by them, but they are as the trembling of the earth and everything proves in him that he is truly the epitome of the Universe. Was not David right in exclaiming that God is infinitely admirable in all His works, (*Psalm 91, v.6 and 138, v. 14*)?

Of the Soul of Mixts

All perfect Mixts which have life, have a soul, or spirit, and a body. The body is composed of clay, or Earth and Water; the soul which gives form to the Mixts, is a spark of the Fire of Nature, or an imperceptible ray of Light, which acts in the Mixts according to the actual arrangement of the Matter, and the perfection of the specific organs in each of them. If the beasts have a soul, it differs from their mind only in degree.

The specific forms of the composites, or if one prefers, their soul, preserve some knowledge of their origin. The soul of Man reflects often upon the divine Light. It seems to wish to penetrate into that sanctuary, accessible to God alone: it strives continually to reach it, and finally returns to it. The souls of animals, these beings, which a secret motive of Heavens has placed here below, and which derive their organization from the treasures of the sun, the souls of animals seem to have a sympathy with this star by the different omens of its rising, of its setting, even of the movement of the heavens, and of the changes of temperature in the air, which their movements announce to us.

Supported by the air, and almost entirely aerial, the souls of vegetables push the head of their stalk as high as possible, as if eager to return to their land.

Rocks, stones, formed of Water and of Earth, are baked in the earth as in a potter’s oven, this is why they incline to the earth as if making parts of it. But the precious stones and metals are more favored by celestial influences; the first are as the tears of Heaven, and a congealed celestial dew; for this reason the Ancients attributed them so many virtues. The sun and the stars seem to have also a particular care for the metals, and one would say that Nature leaves to them the duty to give them their form. The soul of metals is, we may say imprisoned in their material envelope; the Philosopher’s Fire can draw it from this envelope and make it produce a son worthy of the sun, and an admirable quintessence, which draws Heavens near us.

Light is the principle of life, and shadow of death. The souls of the Mixts are rays of Light, and their bodies are abysses of shadows. Everything lives by Light, and everything which dies is deprived of it. It is because of this principle, to which we pay so little attention, that we say commonly of a dead man, *il a perdu la lumière*, (he has lost the light); and as Saint John says, "*Light is the life of men*," (*Evang., ch. I.*).

Each composite has faculties which are peculiar to it. As far as animals are concerned, we need only to reflect upon their actions to be convinced of this. The time of mating, which is so well known to them, the just distribution of parts in the progeny; the use which they make of each member; the attention and care which they give to the nourishment and defense of their young; their different affections, of pleasure, of fear, of good will toward their masters, their disposition to receive instructions, their skill in procuring the necessaries of life, their prudence in shunning that which could injure them, and many other things which an observer may notice, prove that their soul is endowed with a kind of reasoning.

Vegetables have also a mental faculty, and a method of knowing and foreseeing. The vital faculties are with them the care of producing their like, the multiplicative, nutritive, augmentative, sensitive and other virtues. Their idea is manifested in the presage of the weather, and the knowledge of the temperature which is favourable to them to germinate and shoot forth their stalks; their strict observation of climatic changes, as laws of Nature, in the choice of the aspect of the heavens which is suitable for them; in the manner of burying their roots; of elevating their stalks; of extending their branches; of developing their leaves; of forming and coloring their fruits; of transmuting the elements into food; of infusing into their germs a prolific virtue.

Why do certain plants grow only in certain seasons, although one sows them as soon as they are mature, or they are sown by the natural fall of their grains? They have their vegetative principle, and yet they will develop it only at certain times, unless art furnishes them that which they would find in the season suitable for them. Why does a plant sown in bad ground, adjacent to good soil, why does it direct its roots to the side of the latter? What teaches an onion placed in the earth, germ downwards, to direct it towards the air? Why do ivy and other plants of the same species, direct their feeble branches towards trees which can sustain them? Why does the pumpkin push its fruit with all its strength towards a vase of water placed near it? What is it that teaches plants, in which one remarks the two sexes, to place themselves always the male near the female, and often very much inclined towards each other? Let us confess that all this passes our understanding; that Nature is not blind and that she is governed by Wisdom.

Of the Generation and Corruption of the Mixts

Everything returns to its principle. Each individual exists in potentiality in the material world before appearing in its individual form, and will return in its time and in its order to the point whence it has departed, as the rivers in the sea, to be born again in their turn, (*Eccles., ch. I. V. 5*). It is perhaps thus that Pythagoras understood his metempsychosis which has not been comprehended.

When the Mixt is dissolved, because of the weakness of the corruptible elements which compose it, the ethereal part abandons it, and returns to its native country. Then derangement, disorder and confusion take place in the parts of the corpse, because of the absence of that which preserved order in it. Death, corruption, take possession of it, until this matter receives anew celestial influences, which reuniting the scattered Elements, will render them suitable for a new generation.

This vivifying spirit does not separate from matter during generative putrefaction, because it is not an entire and perfect corruption, as that which produces the destruction of the Mixt. It is a corruption

combined and caused by this same spirit, to give to matter the form which suits the individual which it is to animate. It is some time in a state of inactivity, as we see in the germs; but it only needs to be excited. As soon as it is, it places the matter in movement; and the more it acts, the more it acquires new forces until it has finished the perfecting of the Mixt.

Let the materialists, the ridiculous partisans of chance in the formation and preservation of composites, examine what we have said, and reflect upon it seriously and without prejudice; and let them then say how an imaginary being, can be the efficient cause of something real and so well combined. Let them follow this Nature step by step, her processes, the means that she employs and her results. They will see, if they do not close their eyes to the light, that the generation of the composites has a determined time; that everything in the Universe is made by weight and measure, and that only an Infinite Wisdom could preside over it.

The Elements begin their generation by putrefaction. They are resolved into a humid nature or First Matter; then chaos is made, and from this chaos generation. Thus rightly do Physicists say that preservation is a continual creation since the generation of each individual corresponds to the creation and preservation of the Macrocosm. Nature is always consistent; she has only one right way, from which she departs only because of insurmountable obstacles, then she makes monsters.

Life is the harmonious result of the union of Matter with Form, which constitutes the perfection of the individual. Death is the appointed limit where the disunion and separation of Form from Matter takes place. One begins to die as soon as this separation begins, and the dissolution of the Mixt is the end.

Everything which lives, whether vegetable or animal, has need of nourishment for its preservation, and there are two kinds of food. Vegetables are nourished not less on air than on water and earth. The bosom of the earth would soon be exhausted if not continually replenished with the Ethereal Milk. Moses expresses this perfectly in the terms of the benediction which he gave to the sons of Joseph : *De benedictione Domini terra ejus; de pomis cœli et rore atque abysso subjacente, de pomis fructuum Solis et Lunæ; de pomis collium æternorum, de vertice antiquorum montium: et de frugibus terræ, et de plentitudine ejus, etc*., (*Deuter. 33*).

Would Nature have taken the care to place the lungs, those admirable and indefatigable bellows, near the heart simply to refresh it? No, they have a more important office: it is to inhale and to transmit to the heart this ethereal spirit which comes to the aid of the vital spirits; repairs their loss and multiplies them sometimes. This is why we breathe oftener when much agitated, because a greater waste of spirits them takes place, and Nature seeks to repair this loss.

Philosophers give the name of *spirits*, or *spiritual natures*, not only to immaterial beings, who can be known only by the intellect, such as angels and demons, but also to those which, although material, cannot be perceived by the senses because of their great tenuity. Pure air, or Ether, is of this nature, as are the influences of celestial bodies, Innate Fire, seminal, vital, vegetable spirits, etc. They are the ministers of Nature, who seems to act upon Matter only by means of them.

The Fire of Nature is manifested in animals only by the heat which it excites. When it is withdrawn death takes its place, the elementary body or corpse remains entire until putrefaction begins. This Fire is too weak in the vegetables to become apparent even to the sense of touch.

We do not know what is the nature of common fire; its matter is so tenuous that it is manifested only by the other bodies to which it attaches itself. Coal is not fire, nor is the wood which burns, nor the flame, which is only an inflamed smoke. It appears to be extinguished and to vanish when food is lacking to it. It must be an effect of Light on combustible bodies.

Of Light[38]

The origin of Light proves to us its spiritual nature. Before matter began to receive its form, God created Light; it was immediately diffused in matter, which served as the wick for its maintenance. The manifestation of Light was, we may say, the act which God exercised upon Matter; the first marriage of the Creator with the creature, of the spirit with the body.

At first diffused everywhere, Light seemed to collect in the sun, as several rays unite in a point. The light of the sun is consequently a luminous spirit, inseparably attached to this star, whose rays are clothed with particles of Ether in order to become sensible to our eyes. They are streams which flow continually from an inexhaustible source, and which diffuse themselves throughout the vast extent of the Universe.

Yet, we must not conclude that these rays are purely spiritual. They are corporified with Ether, as the flame with the smoke. If we furnish in our hearths a perpetually smoky fuel we will have a perpetual flame.

The nature of Light is to flow continually: and we have agreed to call rays those effluxions of the sun mixed with Ether. Yet, we must not confound Light with the ray, or with the splendour and brightness. Light is the cause; brightness the effect.

When a lighted candle is extinguished the igneous and luminous spirit, which inflames the wick, is not lost, as is commonly believed. Its action simply disappears when food is lacking to it. It is diffused in the air, which is the receptacle of Light, and of the spiritual nature of the material world.

So bodies return by resolution to the matter whence they have been derived; so also, the natural forms of individuals return to the universal forms, or Light, which is the vivifying spirit of the Universe. One must not confound this spirit with the rays of the sun, since there are only the vehicle of it. It penetrates even to the center of the earth, when the sun is not on our horizon.

Light is for us a vivid image of Divinity. Divine love being unable, to speak thus, to contain itself in itself; has been diffused outside itself and multiplied in creation. So Light is not confined to luminous bodies: it is scattered, it is multiplied, it is as God, an inexhaustible source of benefit. It is communicated always without any diminution; it seems even to acquire new strength by this communication, as a master who, by imparting knowledge to his pupil, strengthens his own.

This igneous spirit, born into bodies by the rays, is easily distinguished from them. The latter are communicated only as long as they find in their way no opaque bodies which arrest their course. The former penetrates even the most dense bodies, since we feel the heat on the side of a wall opposite to that on which the rays fall, although they have not been able to penetrate it. This heat exists even after the rays have disappeared with the luminous body.

Every transparent body, glass especially, transmits this igneous and luminous spirit without transmitting the rays: this is why the air, which is behind, in furnishing a new body to this spirit,

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[38] It is the Universal Agent, the Universal Plastic Mediator, the common receptacle of vibrations, of Movement and of the images of Form, Maya.

This Universal Agent is the *Od* DO of the Hebrews and of Chevalier de Reichembach, the Astral Light of the Martinists. The use and manipulation of this force constitutes the Grand Arcanum of Practical Magic.

F. Jollivet-Castelot, Comment On devient Alchimiste, p. 282.

The Universal Agent when magnetizing the world, is called Astral Light; when it forms the metals, it is named AZOTH or *Sophic Mercury . . . Eliphas Lévi.*

becomes illuminated and forms new rays, which are diffused as the first ones. Besides, every transparent body, while serving as a means to transmit this spirit, not only finds itself enlightened, but becomes luminous; and this increase of brightness is easily manifested to those who notice it. This augmentation of splendour would not take place, if the transparent body transmitted the rays as it receives them.

Mr. Pott appears to have adopted these ideas of the Hermetic Philosophers regarding Light, in his Essay: *Of chemical and physical observations on the properties and effects of Light and Fire*. He has agreed perfectly with d'Espagnet, whose sentiment I here analyze and who lived about a century and a half ago. The observations which this learned professor of Berlin brings forward, all agree in proving the truth of what we have said. He calls Light *the great and marvellous agent of Nature*. He says that its substance, because of the tenuity of its parts, cannot be examined by number, measure or weight; that chemistry cannot expose its exterior form, because it cannot be thought of in any substance, much less expressed; that its dignity and excellence are announced in the Sacred Scriptures, where God causes Himself to be called by the name of Light and of Fire: since it is said that God is Light, that He dwells in Light; that Light is His Vestment; that life consists in Light, that He makes His angels flames of Fire, etc., and finally, that several persons regard Light rather as a spiritual being than a corporeal substance.

In reflecting on Light, the first thing, says this author, which is presented to my eyes and my mind, is the Light of the sun; and I presume that the sun is the source of all the Light found in Nature; that all Light returns to it as in its circle of revolutions, and that from it it is sent anew upon our globe.

I do not think, adds he, that the sun contains a burning, destructive fire; but it encloses a substance luminous, pure, simple and concentrated, which enlightens all. I regard Light as a substance which delights, which animates, and which produces brightness; in a word, I regard it as the first instrument which God employed, and as the one which He still employs in Nature. Whence comes the worship which some pagans have rendered to the sun; whence the fable of Prometheus, who stole Fire from Heaven, to communicate it to the earth.

Although Mr. Pott does not approve apparently, he does, in reality, support the sentiment of those who make Ether a vehicle of the substance of Light, because says he, they multiply beings without necessity. But if Light is a simple being, as he avows, could it be manifested except through some sensible substance? It has the property of penetrating very subtle bodies by its tenuity, which is superior to that of the air, and by its progressive movement, which is more rapid than we can imagine; but he does not dare to decide whether it is due to a spiritual substance, although he is certain that the moving principle is as ancient as this substance itself.

Movement, as movement, does not produce Light, but manifests it in suitable substances. It shows itself only in mobile bodies, that is to say, in an extremely subtle matter, adapted to the rapid movement, whether this matter flows immediately from the sun, or its atmosphere, and penetrates to us; or whether (which appears, says he, more probable), the sun puts in movement those extremely subtle substances of which our atmosphere is full.

This is, then, a vehicle of Light, and a vehicle which does not differ from Ether; since this Savant adds, further on: "*It is also the cause of the movement of Light which acts on our Ether, and which comes principally and most efficaciously from the sun*." This vehicle is not, even according to him, a being multiplied without necessity.

He distinguishes Fire from Light, and notes their differences; but after having said that Light produces brightness, he here confounds the latter with the luminous principle, as one may conclude from the instances which he relates. I would have concluded from them that there is a Fire and a Light which do not burn, that is to say, which do not destroy the bodies in which they are adherent;

but not that there is a Light without Fire. This lack of distinction between the principle, or cause of the splendour and brightness, and the effect of this cause, is the source of an infinite number of errors in regard to this matter.

Perhaps it is only the mistake of the translator who may have employed the terms Light and brightness, indifferently as being synonymous. I would be much inclined to believe this, since Mr. Pott, immediately after having related the different phenomena of phosphorescent substances, rotten wood, glow worms, burned clay rubbed, etc., says, that the substance of Light in its purity, or separated from every other body, does not permit itself to be perceived; that we treat it surrounded by an envelope, and that we know its presence only by induction. This is to distinguish Light, properly speaking, from the brightness which is the effect of it. With this distinction it is easy to explain a great number of phenomena which would remain incomprehensible without it.

Heat, although the effect of movement, is, we may say, identified with it. Light being the principle of Fire, is the principle of movement and of heat. The latter being only a lesser degree of Fire, or the movement produced by a more moderate Fire, more distant from the affected body, it is to this movement that water owes its fluidity, since without this cause it becomes ice.

One must not confound elementary Fire with the fire of the cook-stove, and one must observe that the former becomes an actual burning fire only when combined with combustible substance; of itself it gives neither flame, nor Light. Thus the Phlogiston, or a substance oily, sulphurous, resinous, is not the principle, but simply the matter suitable to maintain and manifest it.[39]

The arguments of Mr. Pott prove that the opinions of d'Espagnet and other Hermetic Philosophers, in regard to Fire and Light, are very reasonable and conformable to the most exact Physico-chemical observations, since they agree with this learned professor of Chemistry in the Academy of Sciences and Belles-Lettres of Berlin. So these Philosophers understood Nature: and since they understood her, why not try to lift the obscure veil under which they have concealed her processes by their enigmatical, allegorical and mythical discourses, rather than to scorn their reasonings because they appear unintelligible, or to accuse them of ignorance and deceit?

Of the Preservation of Mixts

The igneous spirit, the vivifying principle gives life and vigour to the Mixts, but this Fire would soon consume them, if its activity was not tempered by the aqueous humour which binds them together. This moisture circulates continually in all things. It makes a revolution in the Universe, by means of which some of the Mixts are formed, or nourished, or even increased in volume, while its evaporation and absence causes others to perish.

All the machinery of the world composes only one body, all the parts of which are bound by means which partake of the nature of the extremes. This bond is hidden, this knot is secret; but it is not the less real, and it is by mean of it that all these parts lend themselves to mutual aid, since there is a relation, and a true commerce between them. The emissary spirits of the superior natures make and maintain this communication; some go away while others come; some return to their source while others descend from it; the last come takes their place, the others depart in their turn, still others succeed them; and by this continual flux and reflux Nature is renewed and maintained. These are the wings of Mercury, by the aid of which this messenger of the gods made such frequent visits to the inhabitants of the Heavens and the Earth.

[39] A substance quite analogous to the Philosopher's Fire is Oxygen, a gas without the presence of which combustion is impossible, although incombustible itself; and quite opposite to Hydrogen, which burns in the air although incapable of maintaining combustion. E.B.

This circular succession of spirits is made by two means, rarefication and condensation, which Nature employs to spiritualize bodies and to corporify spirits; or, if one wishes, to thin the gross elements, to open them, to elevate them to the subtle nature of spiritual matters, and then make them return to the nature of the gross and corporeal elements. They undergo continually such metamorphosis. The air furnishes water a thin aerial substance which begins to corporify; water communicates it to the earth, where it is corporified still more. It then becomes food for mineral and vegetables. In the latter it becomes stalk, bark, leaves, flowers, fruit, in a word, a corporeal palpable substance.

In the animal, Nature separates the most subtle, the most spiritual part of the solid and liquid food, to change it in the principle of nourishment. It changes and specifies the purest substance into sperm, flesh, bone, etc., and leaves the grossest and most heterogeneous parts for the excrements. Art imitates Nature in her resolutions and compositions.

Of The Moist Radical[40]

The life and preservation of individuals consists in the close union of form and matter. The knot, the bond, which forms this union, consists in that of the Innate Fire with the Humid Radical. This humidity is the purest, the most digested portion of matter, and an oil extremely rectified by the alembics of Nature. The germs of things contains much of this Moist Radical, in which a spark of celestial Fire is nourished; and when placed in a suitable matrix, causes, when constantly aided, all that is necessary for production.

We find something immortal in this Humid Radical; the death of the Mixts does not cause it to vanish or to disappear. It resists even the most violent fire, since it may be found in the ashes of burned corpses.

Each Mixt contains two moistures, the one of which we have just spoken, and an elementary moisture, in part aqueous, in part aerial. The latter yields to the violence of fire; it vanishes in smoke, in vapours, and when it is entirely evaporated the body is only ashes, or parts separated the one from the other.

Not so with the Moist Radical; as it constitutes the basis of the Mixts, it braves the tyranny of fire, it suffers martyrdom with insurmountable courage, and remains obstinately attached to the ashes of the Mixt; which indicates plainly its great purity.

Experience has shown to glass-makers, people usually very ignorant concerning Nature, that this Moisture is concealed in ashes. They have found by means of fire the secret of manifesting it, so far as art and the violence of artificial fire are capable. To make glass the ashes must be fused, and there could be no fusion where there is no moisture.

Without knowing that the salts extracted from ashes contain the greatest virtue of the Mixts, laborers burn the stubble and grass to increase the fertility of their fields. Proof that this Humid Radical is inaccessible to the attacks of fire; that it is the principle of generation, the basis of the Mixts, and that its virtue, its active fire, remains torpid only until the earth, common matrix of principles, develops its faculties, which we see daily in seeds.

[40] Or *Viscous Moisture*. It is the Mercury of the Philosophers, which is the basis of all the beings of the three kingdoms of Nature; but which is more particularly the seed and basis of metals when philosophically prepared for Hermetic Work. - *Pernety. Dict. Myth. Herm. P. 202.*

This Radical Balm is the ferment of Nature, which is scattered through the whole mass of individuals. It is an ineffaceable tincture, which has the property of multiplying and which penetrates even its grossest detritus, since one employs it successfully to manure lands and to increase their fertility.

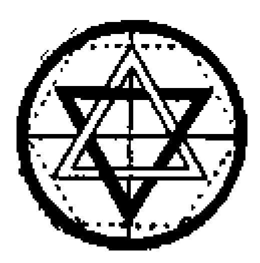
One can rightly conjecture, that this basis, this root of the Mixts, which survives their destruction, is a part of the *First Matter*, the purest and indestructible portion stamped with the seal of Light from which it received form. For the marriage of this First Matter with its form is indissoluble, and all the elements corporified as individuals derive their origin from it. Indeed was not such a matter necessary to serve as the incorruptible basis, and as the cubic root to corruptible Mixts, to be able to be their principle, constant, perpetual and yet material, around which would turn continually the vicissitudes and changes which material beings experience daily?

If one was permitted to conjecture and to penetrate the obscurity of the future, would one not say that this unalterable substance is the foundation of the material world, and the ferment of its immortality, by means of which it will exist even after its destruction, after having passed through the tyranny of fire, and after having been cleansed of its original defects, in order to be renewed and to become incorruptible and unalterable for all eternity?

It seems that Light has as yet worked only upon it, and that it has left the rest in shadows. So it preserves always a spark of it, which it is only necessary to excite.

But the Innate Fire is very different from Moisture. It partakes of the spirituality of Light, and the Humid Radical is of a nature midway between the extremely subtle and spiritual matter of Light, and gross, elementary, corporeal matter. It partakes of the nature of both, and connects these two extremes. It is the seal of the visible and palpable treaty of light and shadows; the point of union and of commerce between the Heavens and the Earth.

Thus one cannot, without error, confound this Humid Radical with Innate Fire. The latter is the inhabitant, the former the habitation, the dwelling. It is, in all the Mixts, the laboratory of Vulcan; the hearth on which is preserved that immortal Fire, the prime-motor created from all the faculties of individuals; the universal Balm, the most precious Elixir of Nature, the perfectly sublimated Mercury of Life, which Nature distributes by weight and measure to all the Mixts. He who will know how to extract this treasure from the heart, and from the *hidden center* of the productions of this lower world, to despoil it of its thick elementary shell, which conceals it from our eyes; and to draw it from the dark prison in which it is enclosed and inactive, may boast of knowing how to make the most precious MEDICINE to relieve the human body.



Of the Harmony of the Universe

The superior and inferior bodies of the World having the same source, and the same matter as a principle, have preserved a sympathy which causes that the purest, the noblest, the strongest,

communicate to those who are less so all the perfection of which they are susceptible. But when the organs of the Mixts are badly arranged, naturally or through accidents, this communication is hindered: the order established for this commerce is deranged; the feeble, being less aided, becomes weaker, succumbs, and becomes the principle of its own ruin, *mole ruit suâ*. (*Cosmop. Tract 2*).

The four qualities of Elements, cold heat, dryness and moisture, are we may say, the harmonic tones in Nature. They are not more contrary than the grave tone in music is to the acute; but they are different, and separated by intervals, or middle tones, which connect the two extremes. Just as by these middle tones a very beautiful harmony may be composed, so Nature can combine the qualities of the Elements, so that from them may result a temperament[41] which constitutes that of the Mixts.

Of Movement

Properly speaking, there is no repose in Nature, (*Cosmop. Tract 4*). She cannot remain idle; and if she should permit real repose to succeed Movement for a single instant, all the machinery of the Universe would fall in ruin. Movement has, we may say, drawn it from nothingness; repose would replunge it into nothingness. That to which we give the name repose, is only Movement less rapid, less sensible. Movement is then continual in each part as in the whole. Nature acts always in the interior of the Mixts. Even corpses are not in repose, since they are corrupted, and since corruption cannot take place without Movement.

Order and uniformity reign in the manner of Movement, the machinery of the World; but there are different degrees in this Movement, which is unequal and different in different and unequal things. Geometry even demands this law of inequality: and we may say that celestial bodies have an equal Movement in geometric ratio, namely in proportion to the difference of their size, their distance and their nature.

We easily perceive in the course of the seasons that the methods which Nature employs differ only in appearance. During the winter she appears without Movement, dead, or at least torpid. Yet, it is during this *dead season*, (*morte saison*), that she prepares, digests, covers the seeds, and disposes them for generation. She gives birth, to speak thus, in the spring; she nourishes and rears in the summer. She even ripens certain fruits; she keeps others for the autumn, when they have need of a longer digestion. At the end of this season everything decays, in order to be disposed for a new generation.

Man experiences in this life the changes of the four seasons. His winter is not the time of old age, as we usually say, it is that which he spends in the womb of his mother without action and in shadows, because he has not yet enjoyed the benefits of the solar light. Scarcely is he born when he begins to grow: he enters into his spring; which lasts until he is capable of ripening his fruits. Then his summer succeeds; he strengthens himself, he digests, he develops the principle of life which is to give it to others. When his fruit is ripe, autumn takes possession of him, he dries up, he withers, he bends towards the principle to which his nature draws him, he falls into it, he dies, he is no more.

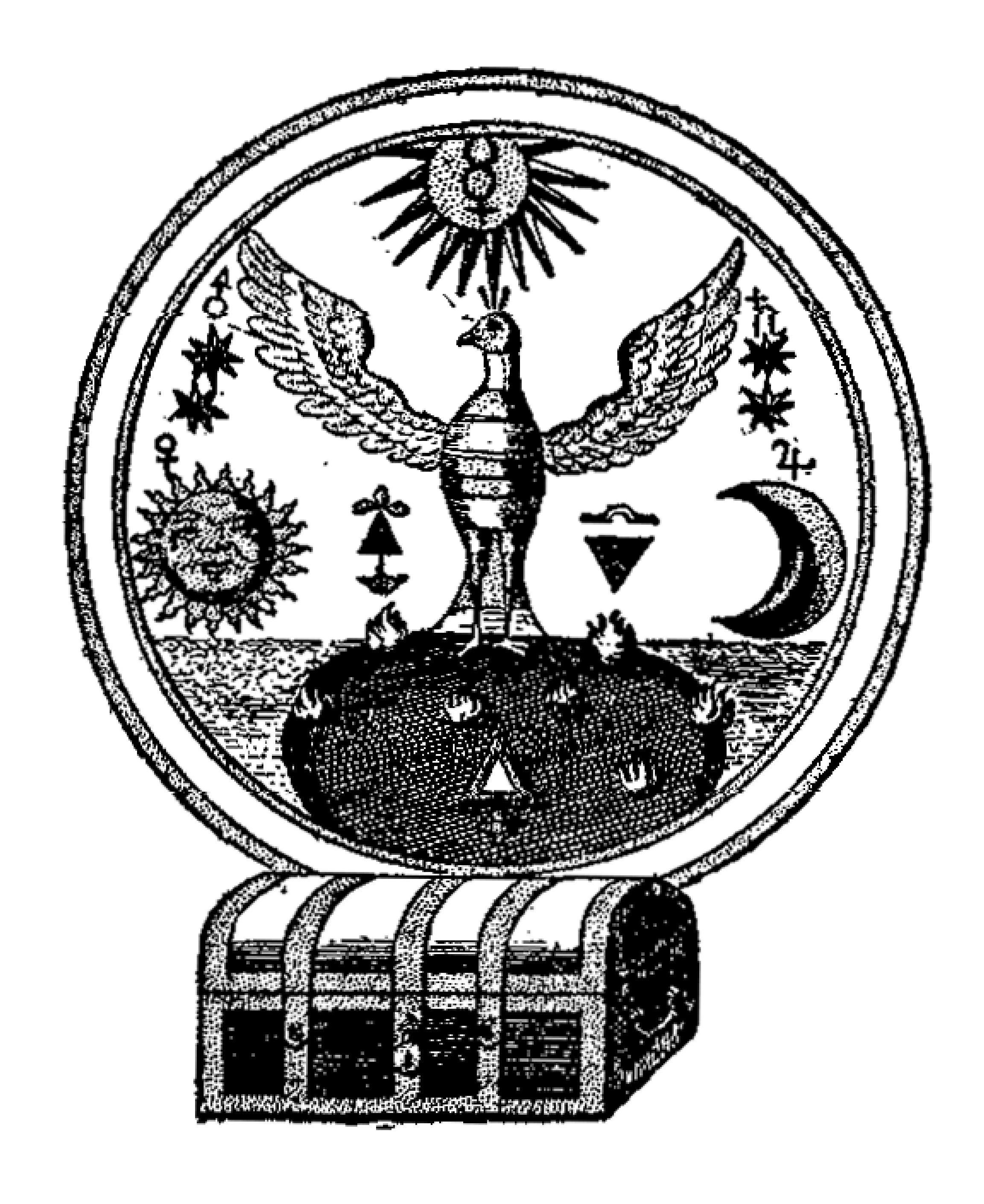
From the unequal and varies distance of the sun proceed the differences of the seasons. The Philosopher who wishes to imitate the processes of Nature in the operations of the Great Work, must meditate on them very seriously.

[41] Temperament, in Music, is the name given by the theorists of the XVIIIth century, to that which modern musicians call *Tonality*, viz., “the ensemble of the mysterious laws which govern the rapports existing between sounds, whether heard successively or simultaneously.” E.B.

I will not here enter into detail of the different Movements of celestial bodies. Moses has explained only that which concerns the globe we inhabit. He has said almost nothing of other planets, doubtless in order that human curiosity should find matter for admiration, rather than subjects for dispute. The inordinate desire to know all still tyrannizes over the feeble mind of Man. He does not know how to conduct himself, yet he is mad enough to prescribe for the Creator rules to conduct the Universe. He makes systems, and speaks in such a decisive tone, that one would say that God has consulted him to draw the world from nothingness, and that he has suggested to the Creator the laws which preserve the harmony of its general and particular Movements. Happily the arguments of these pretended philosophers have no effect upon this harmony. We would have reason to fear consequences as grievous for us, as those which one draws from their principles are ridiculous. Let us calm ourselves: the world will continue in its course as long as it will please its Creator to preserve it. Let us not lose the time of a life as short as ours in disputing about things of which we are ignorant. Let us rather seek the remedy for the ills which overwhelm us: let us implore Him who has created the *Medicine of the Earth*, to permit us to know it; and that after having favored us with this wonderful knowledge we should use it only for the advantage of our neighbour, through love of the Sovereign Being, to whom alone be glory through all the ages.

PART II

Treatise on the Hermetic Work.



Treatise on the Great Work

The aim of this Art is to discover the source of long life and riches, two foundations upon which the happiness of this human existence rests. It has always been a mystery; and those who have treated of it, have in all times spoken of it, as a Science, the practice of which contains something surprising, and the result of which partakes of the nature of the miracle in itself and in its effects. God, the Author of Nature, whom the Philosopher proposes to imitate alone, can enlighten and guide the human mind in the search for this inestimable treasure, and in the labyrinth of the operations of this Art. So all these authors recommend one to address one's self to the Creator, and to demand from Him this favor with much fervor and perseverance.

Should we be surprised that the possessors of such a beautiful secret have veiled it in the shadows of hieroglyphics, fables, allegories, metaphors and enigmas, in order to keep the knowledge of it from the multitude? They have written only for those whom God deigns to enlighten concerning it. To decry them, to declaim strongly against the Science, because one has made useless efforts to obtain it, is a low vengeance; it is to hurt one's own reputation, it is to publish one's own ignorance, and powerlessness to succeed. Let one raise his voice against those vulgar chemists, those *souffleurs*, those burners of charcoal, who, after having been duped by their own ignorance, seek to make dupes of others. I would willingly join this class of critics. I would even wish for the voice of Stentor to make myself better heard. But who are those who concern themselves with speaking and writing against Hermetic Philosophy? People who are ignorant of it, I wager, even of its definition; people whose ill-humour is excited by prejudice. I appeal to their good faith; let them seriously consider whether they understand that which they criticize; have they read and re-read twenty times and more, the good authors who treat of this subject? Who among them can flatter himself that he knows the operations and processes of this Art? What Œdipus has given them knowledge of its enigmas, and its allegories? What sibyl has introduced them into its sanctuary? Let them remain then in the narrow sphere of their knowledge: *ne sutor ultra crepidam*. Or, since it is the fashion, let them bark after such a great treasure which they despair of obtaining. Poor consolation, but the only one which remains to them. And would to God that their cries could be heard by all those who waste their wealth in the pursuit of that which escapes them, instead of knowing the simple processes of Nature.

Monsieur de Maupertuis thinks differently of it. Under whatsoever aspect one considers the Philosopher's Stone, one cannot, says this celebrated Academician, prove the impossibility of obtaining it, but its value, adds he, is not enough to balance the slight hope of finding it, (*Lettres*). M. de Justi, Director General of the mines of the Empress-Queen of Hungary, proves not only the possibility of it, but its actual existence, in a discourse which he has given to the Public, the arguments of which are founded on his own experience.



Philosophical Counsels

Worship God alone; love Him with all your heart ,and your neighbour as yourself. Have always the glory of God as the aim of all your actions; call upon Him; He will hear you, glorify Him, He will exalt you.

Be slow in speech, and action. Do not rely upon your own prudence, upon your knowledge, or upon the word and riches of men, especially of the great. Put your trust in God alone. Cultivate the talent which He has intrusted to you. Be avaricious of time; it is infinitely short for a man who knows how to use it. Do not put off until tomorrow, which is not yours, that which you should do today. Associate with the good and the wise. Man was born to learn; his natural curiosity is a palpable proof of this; and to stagnate in idleness and ignorance, is to degrade humanity. The more a man knows the more closely he approaches the Author of his being, who knows it all. Therefore profit by the knowledge of the Wise; receive their instructions with gentleness, and their corrections always in good part. Flee from the association of the wicked, the multiplicity of affairs, and the multitude of friends.

Sciences are acquired only by study, by *meditation*, and not by dispute. Learn a little at a time; repeat often the same study; the mind can do all when concentrated upon one sole object, but nothing when trying to embrace too many.

Knowledge, joined by experience, forms the truest wisdom. Lacking it, one must have recourse to opinion, to doubt, to conjecture and to authority.

The subjects of Science are God, the Universe, or Macrocosm, and Man. Man has been made for God, Woman for God and Man, and the other creatures for Man and Woman, (*Sap. Chap. 9, v.2* and *follow.)*, so that they should make use of them for their occupations, their own preservation, and the glory of their common Author. Above all act so as to be always in harmony with God and your neighbour. Vengeance is a weakness in Man. Never make an enemy; and if one does evil to you, it would be better and more noble, to avenge yourself by doing good to him.

Aphorism. Of the Truth of the Sciences

There are *two* kinds of sciences, not more. Religion and Physics; that is to say, the Science of God and the science of Nature: all others are only branches of these. There are even spurious ones; they are errors rather than sciences.

God gives the first in its perfection to Saints and the children of Heaven; enlightens the mind of man so that it may acquire the second, and the Demon throws into it clouds to suggest the spurious ones.

Religion comes from Heaven, it is the true Science, because God, the source of all truth, is its Author. Physics is the knowledge of Nature, with it Man can do wonderful things. *Mens humana mirabilium effectrix.*

The power of Man is greater than one would imagine. He can do all with the help of God, nothing without it, except evil.

The key of Science

The first step to wisdom is the fear of God, the second the knowledge of Nature. By it we ascend even to the knowledge of her Author, (*St Paul, Rom. Ch. I, v.20)*. Nature teaches to the discerning the Hermetic Philosophy. The long work is always Nature's; she works simply, by degrees, and always by the same means to produce the same result. The work of Art is shorter; it outstrips Nature. The work of God is done in an instant. Alchemy, properly speaking, is an operation of Nature, aided by Art. It places in our hands the Key of Natural Magic, or Physics, and renders us wonderful to men, by elevating us above the masses.

Of Secrecy

The statue of Harpocrates, who had one hand over his mouth, was, among the ancients, the emblem of secrecy, which is strengthened by silence, and becomes weaker and vanishes by revelation. Jesus Christ the Saviour, revealed our Mysteries only to His disciples, and spoke always to the people through allegories and parables, *Vobis datum est noscere mysteria regni cœlorum. . . . Sine parabolis non loquebatur cis*, (*Matth. Ch. 13, v. II. – Mark ch. IV, v II. – Matth. Ch. 13, v. 34*).

The Priests, among the Egyptians; the Magii, among the Persians, the Mecubales and Kabbalists, among the Hebrews; the Brahmins, in India; the Gymnosophists in Ethiopia; the Orpheuses, the Pythagorases, the Platos, the Porphyrys, among the Greeks; the Druids, among the Western races; have spoken of the Secret Sciences only through enigmas and allegories; if they had stated their true object, there would have been no Mysteries and the sacred would have been confounded with the profane.

Of the Means of Arriving at the Secret

The requirements necessary in order to arrive at this Secret, are: the knowledge of Nature and of one's self. One may not understand the first perfectly, or even the second, without the aid of Alchemy. The love of wisdom, the horror of crime, and of falsehood, the avoidance of cacochemists, the association of the wise, the invocation of the Holy Spirit; not to add secret to secret, to attach one's self only to one thing (because God and Nature delight in unity and simplicity), such are the conditions necessary for obtaining the divine revelation.

Man being the epitome of all Nature, must learn to know himself as the summary, the miniature of Nature. By his spiritual part he is allied to all immortal creatures, and by his material part, to all that which is transient in the Universe.

Of the Keys of Nature

From all material things ashes may be made; from ashes one makes Salt, from Salt one separates Water and Mercury, from Mercury one composes an Elixir, or a quintessence. A body is placed in ashes to be cleansed of its combustible parts; in Salt, to be separated from its earthly parts; in Water, to decay and putrefy; and in Spirit to become quintessence.

The Salts are the Keys of Art and Nature; without knowledge of them it is impossible to imitate her in her operations. We must know their sympathy and antipathy with the metals and with themselves.

There is, properly speaking, only one Salt in Nature, but it is divided into three kinds to form the principles of bodies. These three are NITRE, TARTAR and VITRIOL; all the others are composed of them.

NITRE[42] is made from the first Salt by attentuation, subtilization and the cleansing from the crude and cold terrestrial parts, which are mixed with it. The sun concocts it, digests it in all its parts, makes in it the union of the Elements, and impregnates it with seminal powers, which it bears with the rain into the earth, the common matrix.

The Salt of TARTAR[43] is the same matter more digested by the heat of the matrix in which it was placed, because this matrix serves as a furnace in Nature. Thus from Nitre and from Tartar vegetation is formed. This salt is found wherever Nitre has been deposited, but especially on the surface of the earth, where dew and rain furnish it abundantly.

VITRIOL is the same Salt Nitre, which, having passed through the nature of Tartar, becomes a mineral salt by a longer coction in hotter furnaces. It is found abundantly in the cavities and openings of the earth, where it is united with a viscous humour which renders it metallic.

Of Metallic Principles

From the salts of which we have just spoken, and from their vapours is made the Mercury which the ancients have called *mineral sperm.* From this Mercury and from Sulphur, whether pure or impure, are made all the metals, whether in the interior of the earth, or on its surface.

When the Elements, corporified by their union, take the form of Saltpetre, or Tartar, and of Vitriol, the Fire of Nature, excited by solar heat, digests the humidity which the dryness of these salts attracts, and separating the pure from the impure, the Salt from the Earth, the homogeneous parts from the heterogeneous, it thickens the mineral sperm into quicksilver, then into a metal pure or impure, according to the mixture and to the quality of the matrix.

The diversity of Sulphur and of Mercury, more or less pure, and more or less digested, their union and their different combinations give rise to the numerous family of the mineral kingdom. Stones, marcassites, minerals, differ according to the variety of their matrices and the greater or less degree of coction.

Of the Matter of the Magnum Opus in General[44]

Philosophers have seemingly spoken of this Matter only to conceal it; at least when there is a question of designating it particularly. But when they speak of it in general they enlarge very much upon its qualities and properties; they give to it all the names of the individuals of the Universe, because they say it is the principle and basis of them. “Investigate, say the Cosmopolite, (*Tract I)*, and see if what you propose to do, is conformable to what Nature can do. See what materials she employs and what vase she uses. If you wish to do only what she does, follow her step by step. If you wish to do better, see what can best serve for this purpose; but remain always in natures of the same kind. If,

[42] It is the *Serpens Terrenas* of Basil Valentin.

[43] A Solvent, according to Basil Valentin and a few other Philosophers.

[44] The matter of the Great Work was Gold and Silver united to Mercury and prepared in a special manner. Gold was chosen for its abundance of Sulphur, Silver as containing a very pure Mercury, as for quicksilver, it represented the Salt, mean for uniting both Sulphur and Mercury.

Albert Poisson: *Théories et Symboles.*

for example, you wish to press a metal beyond the perfection which it has received from nature, you must take your materials from the metallic kingdom, and always a male and a female, without which you will not succeed. For you would endeavour to make a metal with grass, or with an animal; just as it would be impossible to produce a tree from a dog or other animal."

This Primal Matter is commonly called Sulphur and Quicksilver. Raymond Lully, (*Codicit. c.9,*) calls them the two extremes of the STONE and of all the metals. Others say, in general, that the sun is its father and the moon its mother; that it is male and female; that it is composed of four, of three, of two and of one[45] and all this to conceal it. It is found everywhere on the earth, on the sea, on the plains, on the mountains, etc. The same author who says that their Matter is unique, says also that the STONE is composed of several individual principles. All these contradictions are only apparent, because they do not speak of Matter from a single point of view; but in regard to its general principles, or to the different states in which it is found in its operations.

It is certain that there is only one principle in all Nature, and that it is the same in the STONE as in other things. It is necessary then to know how to distinguish what the Philosophers say of Matter in general, from what they say of it in particular. There is also only one fixed spirit, composed of a very pure and incombustible fire, which has its seat in the Humid Radical of the Mixts. It is more perfect in gold than in anything else, and only the Mercury of the Philosophers has the property and power of drawing it from its prison, of corrupting it and disposing it for generation. Quicksilver is the principle of volatility, of malleability, and of minerality; the fixed spirit of gold can do nothing without it. The gold is moistened, *re-incruded*, volatilized and submitted to putrefaction by the operation of Mercury; and the latter is digested, thickened, dried, and fixed by the operation of Sophic Gold, which renders it by this means a metallic tincture.

Taken together, they form the Mercury and the Sulphur of Philosophers. But it is not enough that a metallic Sulphur enters into this Work as a leaven, there must also be one as a sperm or germ of a sulphurous nature to unite with the germ of the mercurial substance. This Sulphur and this Mercury have been wisely represented with the ancients by two serpents, the one male, the other female, twisted around the golden rod of Mercury. This rod is the Fixed Spirit, to which they must be attached. These are the serpents sent by Juno against Hercules when this hero was still in his cradle.

This Sulphur is the soul of bodies, and the principle of the exuberation of their tincture;[46] common mercury is deprived of it; common gold and silver have it only for themselves.[47] The mercury suitable for the Work, must first be impregnated with an invisible Sulphur[48] (*d'espagnet, can. 30*), in order that it may be more disposed to receive the visible tincture of perfect bodies, and that it may be able then to communicate it with interest.

Many chemists sweat blood and water to extract the tincture from common gold; they imagine that by torturing it they can make it disgorge and that then they will find the secret of augmenting and multiplying it, but

Spes tandem Agricolas vanis eludit aristis.

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[45] That is to say of the four Elements, of the Three Principles, of the Fixed and the Volatile and of One unique Matter.

E.B.

[46] This Tincture is extracted from Gold.

ALBERT POISSON.

[47] Gold and Silver prepared for the work were called Sophic Gold and Silver. Except native gold and silver, which are sufficiently pure, these metals were first purified: gold by cementation, or antimony; silver by coupellation, that is to say, by lead.

(*Jollivet Castelot*)

[48] By dissolving in warm mercury, pure red hot gold in the proportion of one part of gold to seven parts of distilled mercury. See *Secreta Alchemiœ* of St. Thomas Aquinas.

E.B.

Virg. Georg.

For it is impossible for the solar tincture to be entirely separated from its body. Art could not undo in this class that which Nature has so well united. If by means of fire, or by the corrosion of strong waters (acids), they succeed in drawing from gold a colored and permanent liquor, it must be regarded simply as a portion of the body, and not as its tincture; for that which constitutes the Tincture, properly speaking, cannot be separated from the gold. It is this term, Tincture, which causes the illusion of most Artists. I concede that it is a Tincture, at least they will agree that it is altered by the strength of fire, or the strong waters, that it cannot be useful in the Work, and that it could not give to volatile bodies, the fixity of the gold from which it was separated. For these reasons d'Espagnet, (*Can. 34*), advises them not to waste their silver and gold in a work so laborious, from which they could derive no advantage.

Ancient Philosophical Names given to this Matter

The Ancient Philosophers concealed the true name of the Matter of the Magnum Opus with as much care as the Modern. They spoke of it only in allegories and symbols. The Egyptians represented it in their hieroglyphics under the form of an Ox, which was at the same time the symbol of Osiris and Isis, whom they supposed to have been brother and sister, husband and wife, both grand-children of the Heaven and Earth. Others have given to it the name of Venus. They have also called it Androgynous, and the Andromeda, wife of Saturn, daughter of the god Neptune; Latona, Maya, Semele, Leda, Ceres, and Homer has honored it more than once with the title of the Mother of the gods. It has also been known under the names of Rhea, ◊ω∫ τω ρε⌊ν, meaning, fusible earth, and finally by an infinity of other feminine names, according to the different circumstances in which it is found in the successive operations of the Work. They personified it, and each circumstance furnished them a subject for numerous allegorical fables, which they invented as seem good to them.

Hermetic Philosophy wishes that the *Latten*, (name which it has also pleased them to give to their Matter), be composed of a gold and silver, crude, volatile, unripe and full of blackness during the putrefaction, which is called *Belly of Saturn*, from which Venus was engendered. This is why she is regarded as born of the philosophic sea. The salt which was produced from that sea, was represented by Cupid, son of Venus and Mercury; because then Venus signified Sulphur and Mercury, Quicksilver or Sophic Mercury.

Nicolas Flamel has represented the First Matter in hieroglyphic figures, under the form of two dragons, the one winged, the other wingless, to signify, said he, (Explication des Signes. Ch. 4), "the fixed principle, or male, or Sulphur; and by that which has wings, the volatile principle, or moisture, or female, or Quicksilver. These are, adds he, the Sun and Moon of Mercurial source; the serpents and dragons, which the ancient Egyptians have painted in a circle, the head biting the tail, to indicate that they were derived from the same thing and that it was sufficient to itself and that in its contour and circulation it perfected itself. These are the dragons which the ancient Philosopher-Poets have placed to guard the golden apples of the Hesperidian Virgins, and those on which Jason, in his search for the Golden Fleece, poured the liquor prepared by the beautiful Medea: dissertations with which the books of Philosophers are filled, that there is no Philosopher who has not written of them, from the truthful Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Artephius, Morianus, and others, up to the present time.

These are also the two serpents sent by Juno, who is the metallic nature, which the strong Hercules, that is to say, the Sage, was to strangle in his cradle: I mean to conquer and to kill, to make them decay, rot and engender at the beginning of his work. These are again the two serpents attached to the caduceus of Mercury, with which he exercised his great power and transformed himself as he wished.

The tortoise was also with the Ancients the symbol of Matter, because it bears on its shell a kind of representation of that figure 0 of Saturn. This is why Venus was sometimes represented, (Plutarchus. *in præceptis connub.*), seated on a Goat, the head of which as that of the Ram presents almost this figure @ of Mercury, and with her right foot supported upon a tortoise. One sees in a philosophical emblem an Artist preparing a sauce for a tortoise from grapes, and a Philosopher questioned as to what Matter was, responded: *Testudo solis cum pingeudine* vitis.

Among the Aborigenes the figure 0 of Saturn was held in great veneration; they placed it on their medals, their columns, their obelisks, etc. *Ils représentaient Saturne sous la figure d'un vicillard, ayant cependant un air mâle et vigoureux, qui laissait couler son urine en forme de jet d'eau; c`était dans cette eau qu`ils faisaient consister la meilleure partie de leur médecine et de leurs richesses.* Others added the plant called *Molybdenos*, or saturnian plant, whose root they said was of lead, the stalk of silver and the flowers of gold. This is the same of which mention is made in Homer under the name Moly, (*Odyss. B.10, v. 302, etc*).

*Les Grecs inventèrent aussi une infinité de fables à cette occasion, et formèrent en conséquence le nom de Mercure de Μ*ηρʃς, inguin, *et de Κ*ωορς, puer, *parce que le Mercure philosophique est une cau, que plusieurs auteurs, et particulièrement Raymond Lulle,* (*Lib. Secretorum and Alibi*) *ont appelé urine d'enfant. De là aussi la fable d`Orien, engendré de l`urieg de Jupiter, de Neptune et de Mercure.*

Matter is all and yet Simple

Philosophers, always careful in concealing their Matter as well as their processes, call it indifferently, in all the states in which it is found in the course of the operations. They give to it for this purpose many names in particular which suit it only in general, and never has a Mixt had so many names. It is one thing and all things, they say, because it is the radical principle of all Mixts. It is in all and like to all, because it is susceptible of all forms, before it is restricted to some class of individuals of the three kingdoms in Nature. When it is limited to the mineral kingdom, they say that it is like to gold, because it is the basis, the principle and the mother of it. This is why they call it crude gold, volatile gold, unripe gold, leprous gold. It is analogous to the metals, being the Mercury of which they are composed. The spirit of this Mercury is so congealing that it is called the father of stones, the precious as well as the common. It is the mother who conceives them, the humidity which nourishes them, and the Matter which forms them.

The minerals are also formed from it; and as Antimony is the Protheus of chemistry, and the mineral which has the greatest number of properties and virtues, Artephius has named the Matter of the Great Work: *Antimony of the parts of Saturn*. But although it gives a true Mercury, we must not imagine that this Mercury is derived from common *Antimony*, nor that this is the common mercury. Philalethes assures us, (*Introitus apertus, etc.*), that in whatsoever manner one treats common mercury, one will never make from it Sophic Mercury. Cosmopolita says that this is the true Mercury, and that common mercury is only its illegitimate brother, (*Dialog. Mercur. Alkemistæ et Naturæ.*). When the Mercury of the Sages is mixed with silver and gold, it is called the Electra of Philosophers, their brass, their latten, their copper, their steel; and in operations, their venom, their arsenic, their orpiment, their lead, their latten which it is necessary to whiten; Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, the Moon and the Sun.

This Mercury is an ardent water, which has the power of dissolving all the composites, minerals and stones. And all that which resists other solvents, or strong waters, can be dissolved by the Scythe of Old Saturn; which has caused the name of Universal Solvent to be given to it.

Paracelsus, in speaking of Saturn, expresses himself thus: "It would not be *à propos*, that one should be instructed concerning the properties concealed in Saturn; and of all that which can be done with and through him. If it was generally known, all alchemists would abandon every other matter to work only upon this," (*Cœlum Philosph. Can. de Saturno*)."

I will finish what I have to say concerning the Matter of the Great Work by stating certain materials which *souffleurs* generally use in making the golden medicine or the Philosopher's Stone, and which are excluded by some Hermetists. "I have, said Sir Ripley, made many experiments on all the things which Philosophers named in their writings, to make gold and silver, and I wish to recount them to you. I have worked on cinnabar, but it was worth nothing, and on sublimated mercury which costs me much. I made many sublimations of spirits, of ferments, of iron salts, of steel, and of their dross, believing by this means and through these matters to succeed in making the Stone; but I saw finally that I had lost my time, my trouble and my expense. Yet I followed exactly all that which was laid down by these authors; and I found that all the processes which they taught were false. I then made strong waters, corrosive waters, ardent waters, with which I worked in different manners, but always to no purpose. I had recourse after this to egg shells, to sulphur, to vitriol, which made artists take for the Green Lion of the Philosophers, to arsenic, to orpiment, to salammoniac, salt of glass, to alkali salt, to common salt, to mineral salt, to saltpetre, to salt of soda, to salt attincar, to salt of tartar and to salt alembrot; but, believe me, be on your guard against all these matters. Flee from the metals imperfectly rubified, the odor of mercury, sublimated or precipitated mercury, you would be deceived in them as I have been. I have tried all, the blood, the hair, the soul of Saturn, the marcassites, the *æs ustum*, the saffron of Mars, the scales and the dross of iron, litharge, antimony, all this is not worth a rotten fig. I have worked much to obtain the oil and water of silver, I have calcined this metal with a prepared salt, and without salt, with eau-de-vie; I have used the corrosive oils, but all this was useless. I have employed the oils, milk, wine, rennet, the sperm of the stars which fall on the earth, celandines, secundines, and an infinity of other things, and I have derived no advantage from them. I have mixed mercury with the metals, I have reduced them to crystals, imagining to do something good, I have sought in the ashes even, but believe me, for goodness sake, flee from such foolishness. I have found only one true work."-

Bernard Trévisan expresses himself in almost the same manner: "And thus, says he, we have seen and known many workmen in these amalgamations and multiplications in white and red, with all imaginable materials and with all the trouble, perseverance and constancy possible; but never have we found our gold, or silver multiplied by a third, a half, or any part. And although we have witnessed so many albifications and rubifications, receipts, sophistications in so many countries, as well in Rome, Navarre, Spain, Turkey, Greece, Alexandria, Barbary, Persia, Messina, Rhodes, France, Scotland, in Palestine and surrounding countries, as in all Italy, Germany, England and almost around the world; never have we found people working, except on sophistical materials and matters, herbal, animal, vegetable and seeds, and mineral stones, salts, alums and strong waters, distillations and separations of the elements and sublimations, calcinations, congelations of quicksilver by herbs, stones, waters, oils, manures and fire, and strange vessels, and never have we found people laboring on the right matter. We found indeed in these countries those who knew the Philosopher's Stone, but never could we make their acquaintance....And I began then to read books before working more, thinking within myself that through men I could not succeed; for if they knew it they would never reveal it; . . . thus I looked where their books most agreed; then I thought that here must be the truth: for they can state truth only in one thing. And thus I found truth. For where they agreed there was the truth; although one names it in one manner, and another in another; *yet it is all one substance* in their words. But I knew that falsity was in diversity and not in harmony; for if it was truth, *they would speak only of one matter*, whatsoever names and figures they might adopt. . . And in truth I believe that those who have written their books parabolically and figuratively, in speaking of hair, of blood, of urine, of sperm, of herbs, of vegetables, of animals, of plants and of stones and

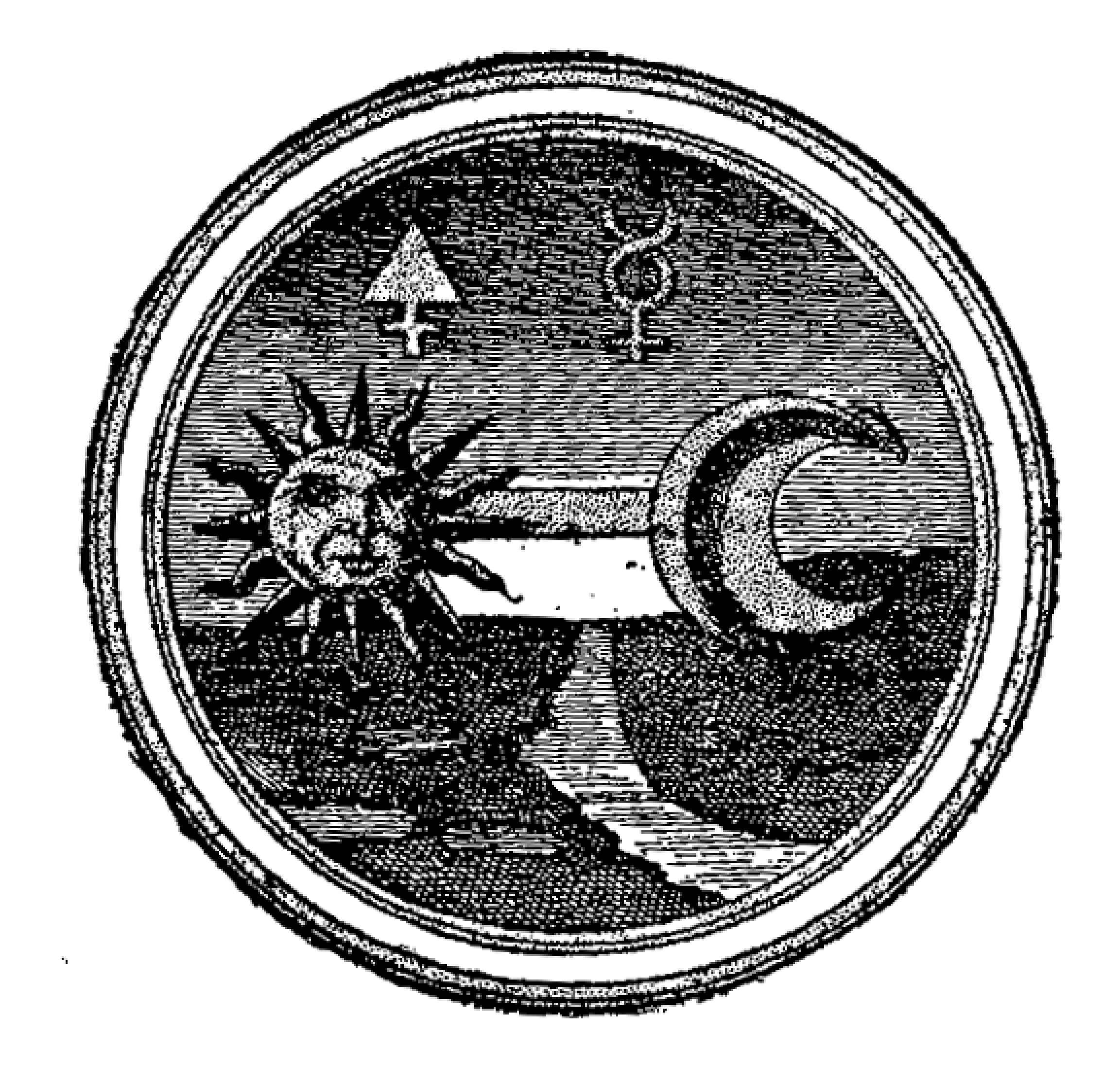
minerals such as salts, alums, copperas, attraments[49], vitriols, borax and magnesia, and any stones and waters whatever; I believe, I say, that this has cost them nothing: or that they have taken no trouble: or that they are too cruel,[50] . . . for know that no book declares in true words, unless by parables, as signs. But Man must think and revise often the possible meaning of what they say, and must regard the operations by which Nature conducts her works.

"Wherefore I conclude, and believe me: Leave sophistications and all those who believe in them: Flee from their sublimations, conjunctions, separations, congelations, preparations, disjunctions, connections and other deceptions . . . . And let those keep silent, who affirm a tincture other than ours, which is not true and brings no profit. And let those keep silent who speak of a sulphur different from ours, which is concealed in Magnesia, (Philosophical); and who wish to derive quicksilver except from the Red Servant; and other water than ours, which is permanent, which unites only to its proper nature, and moistens nothing save that which is one with its own nature.

"Abandon alums, vitriols, salts and all attraments, borax, all strong waters, animals, beasts and all that which may be derived from them; hair, blood, urine, sperms, flesh, eggs, stones and all minerals. Leave all metals alone: although they constitute the entrance of the work, according to the sayings of the Philosophers. Our Matter must be composed of *argent vive*; and *argent vive* is found especially in metals, according to Geber, according to the Grand Rosary, according to the Code of all Truth, according to Morianus, Haly, Calib, Avicenna, Bendegid, Esid, Serapion; according to Sarne, who wrote the book called *Lilium*, according to Euclides, in his seventh chapter of Retractations, and according to the Philosopher (Aristotle) in the third of *Meteors* . . . . And for this, say Aristotle and Democritus, in the *Book of Physics*, chap. III of Meteors, let alchemists rejoice; for they will never succeed in ripening the form of the metals, until they have reduce them to their first Matter...or know, as says in *Turba* Noscus, who was king of Albania, that from man comes only men; from birds only birds, and from beast only beasts, and that Nature perfects herself only in her own species." (*Philosophie des Métaux).*

That which we have just quoted from these two authors is a lesson for *Souffleurs*. It indicates to them clearly that they are not on the right road; and can serve at the same time as a hindrance to those who would desire to deceive, because whenever a man will promise to make the Stone with the matters above excluded, one may conclude that he is either ignorant or a rogue. It is clear also by all this reasoning of Trévisan that the Matter of the Great Work must be of a mineral and metallic nature; but what this Matter is in particular, no one has said exactly.

[49] Vitriols.
[50] In hiding their secret.



The Key of the Work

Basil Valentin, (*Addition aux Douze Clefs*), says that he who has flour will soon have dough, and he who has dough will soon find an oven to cook it. It is as if he said that the Artist who possesses the true Sophic Matter will not be troubled about working with it; it is true, if one believes the Philosophers, that the execution of the Work is a very easy thing, and that more time and patience than expense is required; but this must doubtless be understood of certain circumstances of the Work, and when one has reached a certain point. Flamel says (*Explication des Figures Hiéroglyphiques*); that *the preparation of the agents is more difficult than anything else in the world*. Augurellus, (*Chrysop., 1.* 2), assures us that an Herculean work is necessary.

Alter inauratam noto de vertice pellem
Principium velut ostendit, quod sumere possis;
Alter onus quantum subeas.

And d'Espagnet does not hesitate to say that there is much work to be done, (*Can. 42*): "In the Philosophical Sublimation of Mercury, or the first preparation, the work of a Hercules is necessary, for without it Jason would never have dared to undertake the conquest of the Golden Fleece." Yet we must not imagine that this sublimation is made in the same manner as chemical sublimation. So he has been careful to call it *Philosophical*. It must be understood, from what he says afterwards, that it consists in the dissolution and putrefaction of Matter; because this sublimation is nothing else than a separation of the pure from the impure; or a purification of Matter, which is of such a nature that it can be sublimated only by putrefaction. D'Espagnet then quotes the following words of Virgil. The poet, says he, seems to have touched something of the nature of the quality, and of the culture of the Philosophical Earth in these terms:

Pingue solum primis extemplo a mensibus anni
Fortes invertant Tauri:
... Tunc zephyro putris se gleba resolvit. - Georg. I.

Thus solution is the *Key of the Work*. All Philosophers agree and all speak in the same manner on this subject. But there are two labours in the Work, one to make the Stone, the other to make the Elixir. It is necessary first to begin by preparing the agents; and of this preparation Philosophers have not spoken, because all depends on it, and because the second work is, according to them, only child's play and an amusement for women. Yet the operations of the second work must not be confounded with those of the first, although Morien, (*Entretients du Roi Calid.*), assures us that the second work, which he calls '*Disposition'* is only a repetition of the first. Yet we may believe that it is not such a painful and difficult thing, since they do not say a word about it, or speak of it only to conceal it. Whatsoever this preparation may be, it is certain that it must begin by the dissolution of Matter, although several have given to it the name of calcination or sublimation; and since they have not wished to speak clearly of it, we may, at least, from the operations of the second '*disposition*', draw inductions by which we may enlighten ourselves concerning the operations of the first.

The first step is to make Sophic Mercury, or the Solvent, from a matter which encloses in itself two qualities, and which is part volatile, and part fixed. That which proves that there must be a dissolution, is that Cosmopolita tells us to seek a matter from which we may be able to make a *Water* which dissolves gold naturally and without violence. But a matter may be reduced to water only by dissolution, unless one employs the distillation of common chemistry, which is excluded from the Work.

It is well to remark here that all the terms of common chemistry, which the Philosophers employ in their books, must not be taken in the ordinary sense, but in the *Philosophic* sense. This is why

Philalethes warns us, (*Enarratio Method. trium Gebri medicin.*), that the terms distillation, sublimation, calcination, assation, reverberation, dissolution, descension, coagulation, are only one and the same operation, made in one Vase, that is to say, a concoction of Matter; we will see the differences between them, later on, when we will speak of each on in particular.

Yet, it must be remarked that the demonstrative signs of the Work, of which Philosophers make mention, refer especially to the second work. One will observe also that the greatest number of Hermetic Authors commence their treatises with this second operation, and that they suppose their Mercury and their Sulphur already made; that the descriptions which they give in their enigmas, their allegories, their fables, etc., are almost all drawn from that which takes place in this second "*disposition*" of Morien; whence arise the apparent contradictions which are found in their works, where one says that two matters are necessary, another only one, another three, another four, etc. Thus in order to express one's self in conformity with the ideas of the Philosophers, it is necessary to follow them step by step; and as I do not wish to depart at all from their principles, or from their manner of deducing them, I will copy them word for word, so that the reader may not regard the explanations which I will give of the Fables as a pure production of my imagination. Basil Valentin is one of those who makes the greatest application of the Fables in his *Treatise on the Twelve Keys*; but he employs them to form his own allegories, and not to make apparent the intention of their authors. Flamel, on the contrary, quotes some of them from time to time in the sense of their authors, therefore I will quote him here oftener than the others; and this Treatise shall be composed in the following pages of his own words.

The two Dragons, which he has taken for a hieroglyphic symbol of Matter are, says he, (*Loco cit.)*: "The two serpents sent by Juno, who represents the metallic nature, which the strong Hercules, that is to say, the Wise must strangle in his cradle: I mean by this to conquer and to kill, to make them rot, corrupt and engender *at the beginning of his work*." This is the Key of the Work, or the dissolution announced, the Serpents, the Dragons, the Chimera, the Sphinx, the Harpies and other monsters of the Fable whom one must kill, and as putrefaction succeeds death, Flamel says: "That it is necessary to cause them to rot and to disintegrate. Being then placed together in the vessel of the Sepulchre, they tear each other cruelly and by their great poison and furious rage, they never leave off from the moment when they have seized each other, (unless cold hinders them), until both are covered in all the parts of their bodies with their venom and the blood of their mortal wounds, and finally killing each other, they are choked with their own venom, which changes them after their death, into a *permanent aqua-viva*. This water is, properly speaking, the Mercury of the Philosophers. These are, adds he, those two sperms, masculine and feminine, described in the beginning of my *Philosophic Summary*, which are engendered, (say Rhasis, Avicenna and Abraham the Jew), in the loins and entrails, and from the operations of the four Elements. These are the Humid Radical of the metals Sulphur and Argent-vive; not the common sulphur and quicksilver, which are sold by druggists; but the ones which give to use those two beautiful and dear bodies which we love so much. These two sperms, said Democritus, are not found on the earth of the living. Avicenna says this also, but he adds that they are collected from the waste matter of the Sun and Moon."

Putrefaction is declared in the following terms: "I have pictured these two sperms in the form of Dragons, because of their offensive smell similar to that of the Dragons, and because of the exhalations which mount in the matrass, are dark, black, blue and yellowish . . . . The Philosopher never smells this odour, unless he breaks the vessels; but he judges of it simply by sight and the change of colours, which proceeds from the rottening of this confection." Let the chemists, or souffleurs, who seek for the Philosophical Stone in their calcinations and their crucibles judge from these words of Flamel, whether their operations are conformable, to his; and whether they are right to expose themselves to breathe the vapours of the ill-smelling arsenical matters on which they work.

The putrefaction of the Matter in the Vase is then the principle and the cause of the colours which are manifested, and the first permanent one which must appear is the black colour, which they call

simply the *Black*, and by an infinity of other names, which one will see later on in the course of this work, or in the Dictionary of Terms peculiar to Hermetic Philosophers, which immediately follows it.[51]

This colour signifies then putrefaction and degeneration which ensues, and which is given to us by the *Dissolution* of our perfect body. The following words indicate that Flamel speaks of the second operation, and not of the first: “This Dissolution comes from the external heat, which aids, and the interior igneity, and sharp, wonderful power of the poison of our Mercury, which resolves into pure dust, even into impalpable powder, whatever resists it. Thus the heat acting on and against the Humid Radical, metallic, viscous and oleaginous, produces the blackness of the Matter. It is the black veil with which the ships of Theseus returned victorious from Crete, and which caused the death of his father. Thus it is necessary that the father should die, in order that from the ashes of this phœnix another should rise, and that the son should be king.”

The true key of the Work is this blackness at the beginning of its operations, and if another colour, red or white appears before this one, it is proof that one has not succeeded, or, as our author says: “One must always wish for this blackness, and certainly he who does not see it during the days of the Stone, whatsoever other colour he may see, fails entirely in the Magistery, and can not perfect it with this chaos . . . And truly, I say again, that even if you would work on true Matter, if, at the beginning, after having placed the confections in the philosophical egg, that is to say, sometime after the fire has irritated them, if you do not see this *Head of the Crow, nigrum nigro, nigrius*, (le noir du noir très noir), it is necessary to begin again; for this fault is irreparable. Especially must one fear an orange or reddish colour; because if in the beginning you see it in the egg, doubtless you burn, or have burned the spirit and vivacity of the Stone.”

The bluish and yellowish colours indicate that the putrefaction and the dissolution are not yet finished. The Blackness is the true sign of a perfect solution. Then the Matter is dissolved into a powder more subtle, to speak thus, that the atoms which float in the rays of the sun and these atoms are changed into permanent water. The Philosophers have given to this Dissolution the names, *Death, Destruction* and *Perdition*, the *Infernal Regions, Tartarus, Shadows, Night, Obscure Vest, Supulchre, Tomb, Venimous Water, Charcoal, Manure, Black Earth, Black Veil, Sulphurous Earth, Melancholy, Black Magnesia, Clay, Stinking Menstruum, Smoke, Lamp-Black, Venimous Fire, Cloud, Lead, Black Lead, Philosopher’s Lead, Saturn, Black Powder, Contemptible Thing, Vile Thing, Seal of Hermes, Stinking Spirit, Sublimated Spirit, Eclipsed Sun or Eclipse of the Sun and Moon, Corruption, Black Bark, Sea-foam, Covering of the Vase, Capital of the Alembic, Naptha, Uncleanliness of the Dead, Corpse, Oil of Saturn, Nigrum-Nigro-Nigrius*. They have designated it by all the names which can express, or designate corruption, dissolution and blackness. This is what has furnished the Philosophers with the materials for so many allegories on the dead and the tomb. Some have even named it *Calcination, Denudation, Separation, Trituration, Assation*; because of the reduction of the matters to a very subtle powder. Others, *Reduction to Prima Materia, Malefaction, Extraction, Commixion, Liquefaction, Conversion of the Elements, Subtilization, Division, Humation, Impastation, and Distillation.* Others, *Xir, Cimmarian Shadows, Abyss, Generation, Ingression, Submergion, Complexion, Conjunction, Impregnation*. When heat acts on these matters, they are changed first into powder, and oily, gluey water, which rises as a vapour to the top of the vase, and descends again in dew or rain, to the bottom, (*Artephius,*) where it becomes almost as an oily black broth. This is why it has been called *Sublimation* and *Volatilization*, *Ascension and Descension*. The water then coagulating more and more, becomes like black pitch, which has caused it to be named fetid and stinking. It gives forth a musty odor of sepulchres and tombs. Hermès has called it the *Earth of leaves*, “but its true name, says Flamel, is *Latten which it is necessary to whiten*. The Ancient Sages, adds he, have described it in the history of the Serpent of Mars, which had devoured the

[51] *Dictionnaire Mytho-Hermetique dans lequel on trouve les Allégories fabuleuses des poètes, les Métaphores, les Enigmes et les Termes barbares, des Philosophes Hermètiques expilqués par Dom Antoine-Joseph-Pernety,Religieux Bénédictin de la Congrégation de Saint-Maur.*

companions of Cadmus, who killed it by piercing it with his lance against a hollow oak.[52] Remark this Oak."

But to arrive at this putrefaction we must have an agent, or Solvent, analogous to the body which is to be dissolved. The latter is the soluble body, called masculine germ; the other is the dissolving spirit, called feminine germ. When they are united in the vase, Philosophers give them the name REBIS; this is why Merlin has said:

Res rebis est bina, conjucta sed tamen una..

Philalethes, (*Vera confect. lapid. Philosoph*. p.13 and following), expresses himself thus on the subject of this Solvent: "This feminine germ is one of the chief principles of our *Magisterium*; therefore, it is necessary to meditate deeply upon it, as upon a matter, without which one cannot succeed, since although mercury, it is not indeed a natural argent-vive, but a certain mercury fit for a new generation; and which besides its purity, demands a long and wonderful preparation, which leaves to it, in its integrity, its homogeneous mineral quality. For if one takes from this dissolving spirit its fluidity and mercuriality, it becomes useless for the Philosophic Work, because it has lost thereby its dissolving nature; and if it were changed into powder, in any manner whatever; if it is not of the nature of the soluble body, it is lost, it has no longer any relation or proportion with it, and must be rejected from our Work. Those think madly and wrongly who alter the Quicksilver before it is united with the metallic species. For this Quicksilver before it is united with the metallic species. For this Quicksilver which is not common mercury, is the Matter of all the metals, and we may say their Water, because of its homogeneity with them. It becomes invested with their nature in its mixture with them, and takes all their qualities, because it resembles celestial Mercury, which becomes similar to the qualities of the Planets with which it is in conjunction."

No water can dissolve radically and naturally the metallic species unless it is of their nature, and can be congealed with them. It must pass into the metals as a food which is incorporated with them, and forms with them only one substance. Therefore he who will take from quicksilver its humidity by means of salts, vitriols, or other corrosive substances, acts as a madman. Those are not the less deceived, who imagine to extract from natural mercury a limpid and transparent water, with which they can make wonderful things. Even if they would succeed in making such a water, it would be worth nothing in the Work.

Definitions and Properties of this Mercury

Mercury is a thing which dissolves the metals by a natural dissolution, and which leads their spirits from potentiality to actuality.

Mercury is that thing which renders the material of the metals lucid, clear and without shadow, that is to say, which cleanses them from their impurities, and draws from the interior of the perfect metals their nature and germ which is hidden there.

Dissolving Mercury is a dry vapour, not at all viscous, having much acidity, very subtle, very volatile to fire, having a great property of penetrating and of dissolving the metals. In preparing it, and in making this dissolution, besides the length of the work, one runs a very great danger, says Philalethes. Consequently he advises one to take care of his eyes, his ears and his nose.

[52] Furnace of the Wise. It is spoken, in the Fable, of the hollow Oak against which Cadmus ran through the Dragon which had devoured his companions. The lance which Cadmus used is Fire, the Serpent signifies Mercury. The hollow Oak being the Secret Furnace of the Sages, one understands why the Ancients consecrated it to Rhæa, wife of Saturn.Pernety, *Dict. Mytho-Herm.*

The confection of this Mercury, adds the same author, is the greatest secret of Nature, one can scarcely understand it except by the revelation of God, or of a friend; for one will never succeed by the guidance of books alone.

Dissolving Mercury is not the Mercury of the Philosophers before its preparation, but only afterwards, and it is the beginning of the medicine of the third order.[53]

Those who instead of this Mercury employ for the Philosophic Work natural mercury, or sublimated, calcined or precipitated mercury are greatly deceived.

Dissolving Mercury is an element of the earth in which it is necessary to sow the grain of gold. It corrupts the Sun, putrefies it, resolves it into Mercury, and renders it volatile and like to itself. It is changed into Sun and Moon, and becomes as the mercuries of the metals. It draws out the souls of the bodies, takes them away and concocts them. For this reason the ancient Sages said that the god Mercury attracted the soul of living bodies and led them to the kingdom of Pluto. This is why Homer often calls Mercury, (Α'ργειο ʃνζης), *Arquicida*.

The Dissolving Mercury must not be dry, for if it is, all the Philosophers assure us that it will not be suitable for dissolution. It is necessary then to take a feminine germ, in form similar to that of the metals. Arts renders it the *Menstrum* of the metals; and by the operations of the first medicine, or from its imperfect preparation, it passes through all the qualities of the metals even to those of the sun. The sulphur of the imperfect metals coagulates it, and it takes the qualities of the metal whose Sulphur has coagulated it. If the Dissolving Mercury is not animated, in vain will one employ it for the Work, universal or particular.

The Dissolving Mercury is the unique Vase of the Philosopher in which all the *Magisterium* is accomplished. Philosophers have given to it different names, of which the following are most used:

Vinegar of Philosophers, Field, Aludel, Water, Water of Art, Ardent Water, Divine Water, Fountain Water, Purifying Water, Permanent Water, First Water, Simple Water, Bath, Heaven, Prison, Superior Eye-lid, Sieve, Smoke, Humidity, Fire, Artificial Fire, Corroding Fire, Unnatural Fire, Humid Fire, Jordan, Liquor, Crude Vegetable Liquor, Moon, Matter, Lunar Matter, First Power, Mother, Crude Mercury, Preparing Mercury, First Minister, Fugitive Servant, Nymphs, Bacchantes, Muses, Woman, Sea, Crude Spirit, Concocted Spirit, Sepulchre, Sperm of Mercury, Stygian Water, Oestrich stomach, Vase, Philosopher's Vase, Inspector of concealed Things, Crude Quicksilver taken simply from its mine.

But one must not forget that this Mercury is not that which is sold in apothecary shops.

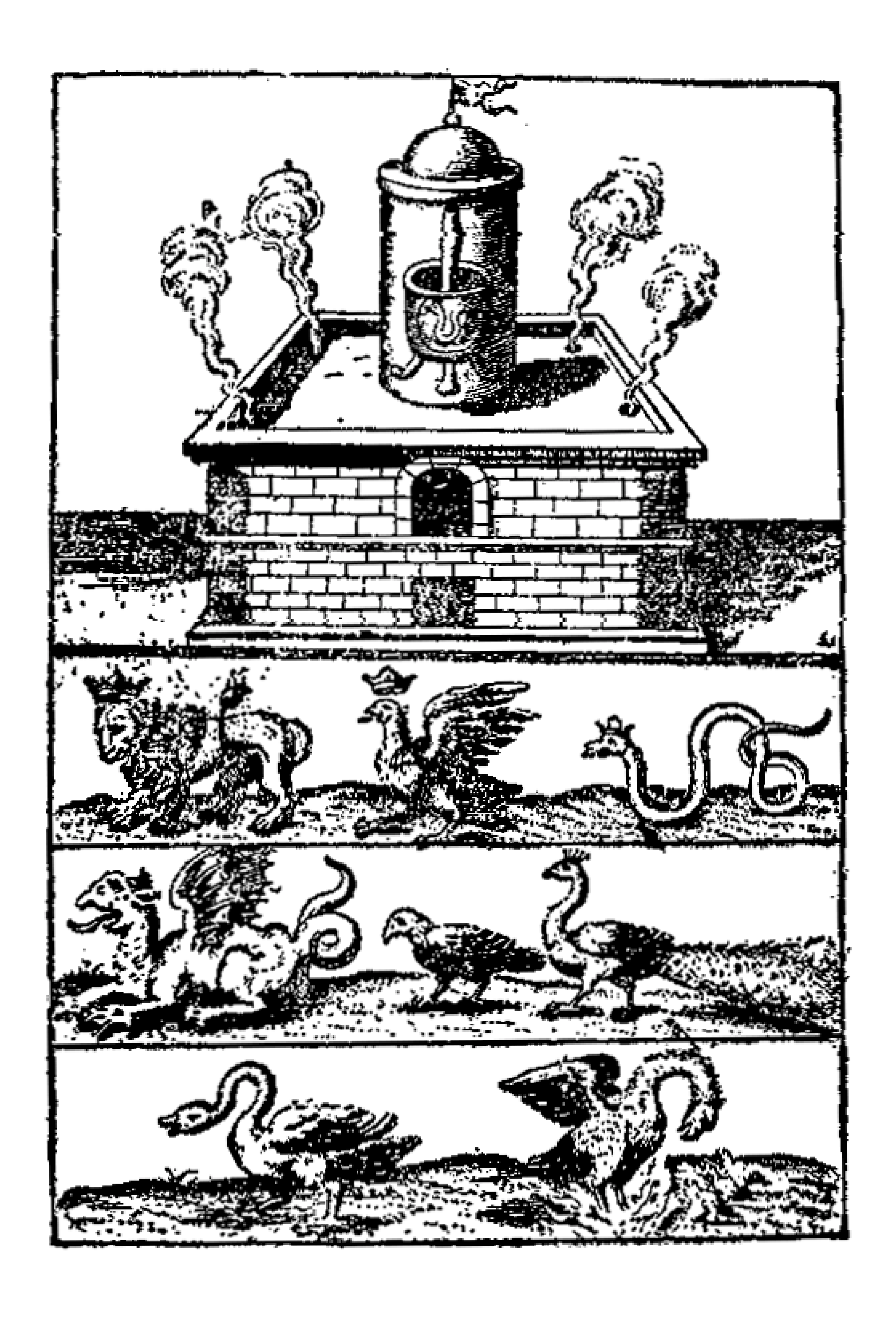
When the conjunction of Mercury with the soluble body is made, the Philosophers speak of the two as of one thing; and then they say the sages find in Mercury all that is necessary for them. Therefore one must not permit one's self to be deceived by the diversity of names; and to warn against error of this kind some of the principal names are here given:

Thickened Water, Our Water, Second Water, Arcanum, Argent-vive, Goodness, Goodness which has several names, Chaos Hyle, Our Compost, Our Confection, Confused Body, Mixed Body, Copper, Æs of the Philosophers (Sophic Brass), Latten, Manure, Aqueous Smoke, Burning Humidity, Strange Fire, Unnatural Fire, Stone, Mineral Stone, Unique Stone, Unique Matter, Confused Matter of the

[53] MEDICINE OF THE THIRD ORDER. It is the preparation of the Stone which Philosophers named *Multiplication* . . . . This medicine carries the Stone to its perfection and multiplies it both in quantity and in quality . . . . It is also named *Medicine of the superior order.* *Pernety Dict. Mytho-Herm.*

Metals, Menstruum, Second Menstruum, Mine, Our Mine, Mine of the Metals, Mercury, Thickened Mercury, Piece of Money, Egg, Philosopher's Egg, Root, Unique Root, Stone known in the Chapters of Books.

Finally it is with this mixture, or Mercury, that most authors begin their books and treats on the WORK.



Of the Vase of Art and That of Nature

There are three kinds of matrices, the first is the Earth, the universal matrix of the world, the receptacle of the Elements, the great vase of Nature, the place where the corruption of the germs takes place, the sepulchre and living tomb of all creatures. It is especially the matrix of the vegetable and mineral.

The second matrix is the *Uterus* in the animal kingdom; that of the birds is the egg, and the matrix of gold and silver, is the rock alone.

The third, that of the mineral kingdom, is known by few persons. The womb being with the sperm the cause of the specification of the metal.

The knowledge of this precious Vase, and of the fixed and saxatilic[54] spirit implanted within it, was one of the greatest secrets of the Kabbalah of the Egyptians. It was necessary to seek a Vase analogous to that which Nature employs for the formation of the metals; a Vase which should become the matrix of the golden Tree of the Philosophers; and one has found no better one than glass. They have added to this the manner of sealing it, in imitation of Nature, so that it should exhale none of the principles. For, as says Raymond Lully, the composition which is made from the substance of the exhaled vapours falling upon the corrupted matter, to moisten and to dissolve it, is putrefaction. This Vase must, then, have a form suitable to facilitate the circulation of the spirits, and must be of a thickness and a consistency capable of resisting their strength.

Names given to This Vase by the Ancients

The Philosophers so introduced this Vase in their allegories that one could not have the least suspicion as to the idea which they had of it. Sometimes it was a tower, sometimes a ship, here a coffer, there a basket. Such was the Tower of Danaé; the coffer of Deucalion, and the Tomb of Osiris; the Casket, the Leather-bottle of Bacchus; the Golden Amphora, or Vase of Vulcan; the Chalice which Juno presented to Thetis; the Vessel of Jason; the Swamp of Lerna, which was thus called from γάρναξ *capsa, loculus*; the Basket of Erichthonius; the casket in which was enclosed Tennis Triodites with his sister Hemithea; the Chamber of Leda; the Eggs from which were born Castor, Pollux, Clytemnestra and Helen; the City of Troy; the Caverns of Monsters; the Vases which Vulcan presented to Jupiter; the Casket which Thetis gave to Achilles, in which they placed the bones of Patrocles and of his friends; the Cup with which Hercules crossed the sea to carry away the oxen of Geryon; the Cavern of Mount Helicon, which served as the abode of Phœbus and the Muses; finally many other things adapted to the fables which one invented on the subject of the Great Work. The Bed of Venus and Mars; the Skin in which Orion was engendered; the Clepsydra, or Horn of Almathœa, (from Κλεωζω, *horn*, and υδωρ, *water*. The Egyptians understood only this by their Wells, their Sepulchres, their Urns, the Mausoleum in the form of Pyramid.

But that which has most deceived those who have studied Hermetic Philosophy in books, is that of the Vase of Art and the Vase of Nature are often not distinguished from each other. They speak sometimes of one, sometimes of the other, as the subject leads them, without making any distinction. They mention generally a triple Vessel. Flamel has represented it in his Hieroglyphics under the figure of a writing-desk. "This vessel of earth in the form of a writing-desk in a niche, is called, says he, the triple-vessel; for in its midst there is a shelf, on this shelf a bowl full of warm ashes, in which is placed the Philosopher's Egg, that is a matrass of glass which you see represented in the form of a

[54] From the Latin *Saxatilis*, which resides in stones.

writing-desk, full of the Confection of Art, that is to say, of *the foam of the Red Sea and of the fat of the mercurial wind*." But it appears from the description which he gives of this triple Vase, that he speaks not only of the Vase, but of the furnace also.

It is absolutely necessary to know the Vase and its form to succeed in the Work. The Vase of Art must be of glass and oval in form[55]; but for that of Nature, Philosophers tell us that we must be instructed perfectly concerning its quantity and quality. It is the Earth of the Stone, or the Female, or the Matrix, in which the germ of the male is received, is putrefied and disposed for generation. Morien speaks of the latter in these terms: "You must know, O Good King, that his Magisterium is the secret of secrets of the Most High God; He has confided it to His Prophets, whose souls He has placed in Paradise. If the Wise Men, their successors, had not comprehended what they said of the *quality* of the Vessel in which the Magistery is made, they would never have been able to do the Work. This Vase, says Philalethes, is an Aludel, not of glass, but of earth; it is the receptacle of the tinctures; and in regard to the Stone, it must contain (the first year of the Chaldeans) twenty-four full Florentine measures: no more, no less."

The Philosophers have spoken of different Vases to deceive the ignorant.[56] They have even thought to make a mystery of this as of all the rest. This is why they have given to it different names, according to the different denominations which it has pleased them to give to the several states of Matter. Thus they have made mention of Alembic, Cucurbit, of Sublimatory and Calcining Vases, etc.[57] But there is only one Vase of Art,[58] which d'Espagnet (*Can. 112 and following*), thus describes: "But all deceit being removed we may speak sincerely, one only Vessel of Art sufficeth to terminate the Work of the Elixir; for the diversity of digestions requireth not the change of Vessels; yea, we must have a care lest the Vessel be changed or opened before the First work be ended. You shall choose a form of Vessel round in the bottom, (or cucurbit) or at least oval, the neck a hand's breadth long or more, large enough, with a straight mouth made like a Pitcher or jug, continuous and unbroken and equally thick in every part, that it may resist a long and sometime an acute Fire. . . The Second Vessel of Art may be of Wood, of the trunk of an oak, cut into two hollow Hemispheres, wherein the Philosophers' egg may be cherished till it be hatched."[59] Trévisan also makes mention of this Trunk of Oak, in the following terms: *Philosophie des Métaux, IV Partie*): "In order that the Fountain should be more powerful, and that horses and other animals should not walk in it, he erected there a hollow Oak, cut in the middle, which kept the sun and its shadow."

Finally the third Vase is the Furnace, which encloses and preserves the two other Vases, and the Matter which they contain. Flamel says that he could never have devined its form, if Abraham the Jew, had not described it with its proportionate Fire in his Hieroglyphic Figures. Indeed Philosophers have placed it in the number of their secrets, and have named it ATHANOR, because of the fire which is continually maintained in it, although not equally at all times because the capacity of the Furnace and the quantity of the Matter demand a proportionate Fire. For its construction see d'Espagnet.[60]

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[55] "The Vase must be round, with a long neck, a narrow aperture, made of glass, or of an earth of similar nature and which must possess its compactness: the orifice must be sealed." – (*Bachon.*)

(Quoted by Pernety in Diction. Myth. Herm.)

[56] The Vessel of the Philosophers is their Water," (*Hermes, Ludas pueroram.*)

[57] "The vessels required for the Work are named *Aludel, Sieve, Mortar*, because the Matter is ground, purified, and perfected therein." (*Calio*)

[58] We need but one Vessel, one Furnace, and one sole operation or regimen; that is after the preparation of the Stone," (*Flamel*). The author of the *Rosarium* expresses himself absolutely in the same words. Pernety, *loco. cit.*

[59] Translation by W. Wynn Wescott, in *Collectanea Hermetica*, Vol. 1 p. 42.

[60] The matter of the Furnace is made of Brick, or of daubed Earth, of Potter's clay well beaten and prepared with horse-dung, mixed with hair, so that it may cohere the firmer, and may not be creacked by long heating; let the walls be three or four fingers thick, to the end that the furnace may be the better able to keep the heat and withstand it. Let the form of the Furnace be round, the inward altitude of two feet or thereabouts, in the midst whereof an Iron or Brazen plate must be set, of a round Figure, about the thickness of a Penknife's back, in a manner possessing the interior latitude of the Furnace, but a little narrower than it, lest it touch the walls; it must lean upon three or four props of Iron fixed to the walls, and let it be full

Of Fire in General

Although we have spoken at length of Fire in the PRINCIPLES OF PHYSICS which precedes this TREATISE, yet it is necessary to say a few words about it, in connection with the Work. We know three kinds of Fire, the Celestial, the fire of our stoves and the Central Fire. The first is very pure, simple and not burning in itself. The second is impure, thick and burning; the Central is pure in itself, but it is mixed and tempered. The first does not generate, and shines without burning; the second is destructive, and burns while shining, instead of generating; the third engenders and enlightens sometimes without burning, and burns sometimes without giving any light. The first is gentle; the second sharp and corrosive; the third is salty and sweet. The first is of itself without colour and without odour; the second is ill-smelling and colored according to its aliment; the third is invisible, although of all colours and of all odours. The Celestial is known only by its operations; the second is known through the senses and the Central by its qualities.

The Fire is very acute in the animals, dull in the metal, tempered in the vegetable, boiling and burning in the mineral vapours.

Celestial Fire has for its sphere the ethereal region, whence it makes itself felt even to us. The Elementary Fire has for its abode the surface of the earth, and our atmosphere; the Central Fire is lodged in the Center of Matter. It is tenacious, viscous, glutinous, and is innate in matter; it is digesting, maturing, neither warm, nor burning to the touch; it scatters and consumes very little, because its heat is tempered by cold.

The Celestial Fire is sensible, vital, active in the animal, warmer to the touch, less digesting, and is sensibly exhaled.

The Elementary Fire is destructive, of an incredible voracity; it wounds the senses, it burns; it digests, concocts, and produces nothing. It is in the animal what physicians call *febrile heat*, and against Nature; it consumes, or divides, the radical humour of our life.

The Celestial Fire passes into the nature of the Central Fire; it becomes internal, engendering; the second is external and separating; the Central is internal, uniting and possessing the quality of rendering matter homogeneous.

The light, or fire of the sun, clothed with rays of ether, concentrated and reverberated on the surface of the earth, takes the nature of Elementary Fire, or of that of our kitchens. This latter passes into the nature of the Celestial Fire by being dilated, and becomes Central by being concentrated in matter. We have an example of these three fires in a lighted candle; its light in its expansion represents Celestial Fire; its flame Elementary Fire, and its wick Central Fire.

As the Fire of the animal is given off with an incredible rapidity especially by constant transpiration, Philosophers have studied to find some means of repairing this loss; and understanding well that this reparation could not be made by that which is impure and corruptible as the animal itself, they have had recourse to a matter, in which this required heat was abundantly concentrated.

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of holes, that the heat may be the moreeasily carried upwards by them, and between the sides of the Furnace and the Plate. Below the Plate let there be a little door left, and another above in the walls of the Furnace, that by the lower the Fire may be put in, and by the higher the temperament of the heat may be sensibly perceived; at the opposite part whereof let there be a little window of the figure of a Rhomboid fortified with glass, that the light over against it may shew the colours to the eye. Upon the middle of the aforesaid plate, let the Tripod of secrets be placed with a double vessel. Lastly, let the Furnace be very well covered with a shell or covering agreeable unto it, and take care that the little doors be always closely shut, lest the heat excape.

An English Translation of the *Hermetic Arcanum* of d’Espagnet, by W. Wynn Wescott in *Collectanea Hermetica*, Vol.1., pp.43-44.

The Art of Medicine, not being able to hinder this loss, and being ignorant of the means of repairing it, has been contented with meeting the accidents which destroy our substance, which come either from the defects of the organs, or from the intemperateness of the blood, of the spirits, of the humours, from their abundance or scarcity, whence death follows infallibly, unless an efficacious remedy is applied, remedy which the Physicians themselves confess to know very imperfectly.

Of Philosophical Fire

The reason which induced the ancient Sages to make a mystery of their Vessel, was the slight knowledge of the manufacture of glass which one possessed in those times. Later on the manner of making it has been discovered. Therefore the Philosophers have not concealed so much the matter and form of their Vessel. Not so of their secret Fire; it is a labyrinth from which the most skilful could not extricate himself.

The fire of the sun cannot be this secret Fire; it is interrupted, unequal; it cannot furnish heat, uniform in its degrees, its measure and its duration. Its heat could not penetrate the thickness of the mountains, nor warm the coldness of marble and of rocks, which receive the mineral vapours from which gold and silver are formed.

The fire of our stoves hinders the union of the miscibles, and consumes or causes to evaporate the bond of the constituent parts of bodies; it is their tyrant.

The Central Fire, which is innate in matter, has the property of mixing substances, and of producing; but it cannot be that Philosophic Fire so much praised, which causes the corruption of the metallic germs; because that which is of itself the principle of corruption, can be the principle of generation only by accident: I say by accident, because the heat which engenders is internal and innate in matter, and that which corrupts is external and foreign to matter.

This heat is very different in the generation of the individuals of the three kingdoms. The animal possesses it in a much higher degree than the plant. The heat of the Vase in the generation of the metal must be proportional to the quality of the germ whose corruption is very difficult. It is then necessary to conclude that as there is no generation without corruption, and no corruption without heat, that the heat must be proportioned to the germ which is employed for the generation.[61]

There are then two heats; a putrifying external heat and a vital or generative internal heat. The internal Fire obeys the heat of the Vase until unbound and delivered from its prison, it renders itself master of it. The putrifying heat comes to its aid, it passes into the nature of the vital heat, and the two then work in concert.

Therefore it is the Vessel which administers the heat suitable to corrupt, and the germ which furnishes the Fire suitable for generation; but as the heat of this Vessel is not so well known for the metal as it is for the animal and the plant, it is necessary to reflect on what we have said concerning Fire in general to find this heat. Nature has so proportioned it in the matrix, as far as animals are concerned, that it can scarcely be augmented or diminished; the matrix in this case is a veritable ATHANOR.

As for the heat of the Vase for the corruption of the vegetable grain, very little is necessary; the sun furnishes it sufficiently. But it is not so in Hermetic Art. The matrix being the invention of the Artist, must have a fire skilfully invented and proportioned to that which Nature implants in the Vase for the

[61] Whenever the Stone changes its colour you will gradually augment the fire, until everything remains fixed in the bottom of the vessel.” (*Isaac of Holland.*)

generation of mineral matters. An anonymous author says that to know the matter of this fire, it is enough to know how the Elementary Fire takes the form of the Celestial Fire, and all the secret of this form consists in the form and structure of the ATHANOR,[62] by means of which, this Fire becomes equal, gentle, continuous and so proportioned that the matter may be able to be corrupted, after which the generation of the sulphur must be made, which will then take the empire for some time, and will rule over the rest of the Work. This is why the Philosophers say that the female rules during corruption, and the hot and dry male rules during generation.

Artephius is one of those who have treated at length of the Philosophical Fire; and Pontanus confesses to having been corrected and has recognized his error in the reading of the Treatise of this Philosopher. This is what he says of it: “Our Fire is mineral, it is uniform, continuous, it does not evaporate unless too strongly excited; it participates of the nature of Sulphur; it is derived from another source than matter, it destroys all, it dissolves, congeals and calcines; it requires skill to find and to make it; it costs nothing, or very little; moreover, it is humid vapourous, digesting, altering, penetrating, subtle, aerial, not violent, not burning, surrounding, containing and unique. It is also the fountain of Living Water, or Quick-Water, which surrounds and encloses the place where the King and Queen bathe. This humid Fire suffices for all the Work in the beginning, in the middle and at the end; because all Art consists in this Fire. There is still a *natural Fire, a Fire against Nature*, and an *unnatural Fire*, which does not burn; finally there is a warm, dry, humid, cold fire. Think well on what I have just said, and work in the right way, without using any strange matter.” What this same author then adds is really an explanation of the three fires; but as he calls them *Fire of Lamps, Fire of Ashes*, and the *Natural Fire of our Waters*, one sees that he has wished to deceive; those who desire a more detailed account of the Philosophical Fire may have recourse to the *Testament* of Raymond Lully and to his *Codicil*; d’Espagnet speaks also of it from the ninety-eighth to the hundred-and-eighteenth Canon. The other Philosophers have made almost no mention of it except to conceal it, or have indicated it only by its properties. But in allegories and fables they have given to this Fire the names *Sword, Lance, Arrows, Javelin, Battle-Ax*, etc; such was the one with which Vulcan struck Jupiter to make him give birth to Pallas; the sword which the same Vulcan gave to Peleus, the father of Achilles; the club which he presented to Hercules; the bow which this hero received from Apollo; the cimiter of Perseus; the lance of Bellerophon, etc. It is the Fire which Prometheus stole from Heaven; that which Vulcan employed to form the thunderbolts of Jupiter, and the arms of the gods: the belt of Venus, the golden throne of the Sovereign of the Heavens, etc. Finally, it is the Fire of Vesta so scrupulously preserved at Rome that the vestal virgins whose duty it was to guard it were punished by death if they permitted it to be extinguished.

Operative Principles

The Preparation is composed of four parts. The first is the Solution of the Matter in Mercurial Water; the second is the Preparation of the Mercury of the Philosophers; the third is the Corruption; the fourth is the Generation and the Creation of Philosophic Sulphur. The first is made by the mineral germ of the Earth; the second volatilizes and converts bodies into sperm; the third causes the separation and rectification of substances; the fourth unites and fixes them, which is the Creation of the Stone. Philosophers have compared the Preparation to the creation of the world, which was first a mass, a chaos, an empty, formless and gloomy Earth which was nothing in particular, but all in general; the second is a form of heavy, viscous water, full of the occult spirit of its Sulphur; and the third is the figure of the Earth which appeared arid after the separation of the Waters.

[62] The Athanor of the Philosophers is not the furnace of the common chemists; it is the Sophic Matter itself, animated by the Philosophical Fire, or innate fire residing in latency in its own nature. We recommend to the Reader the patient meditation of this part of the Treatise on the Great Art; we can assure him that he will be fully rewarded for his plans. E.B.

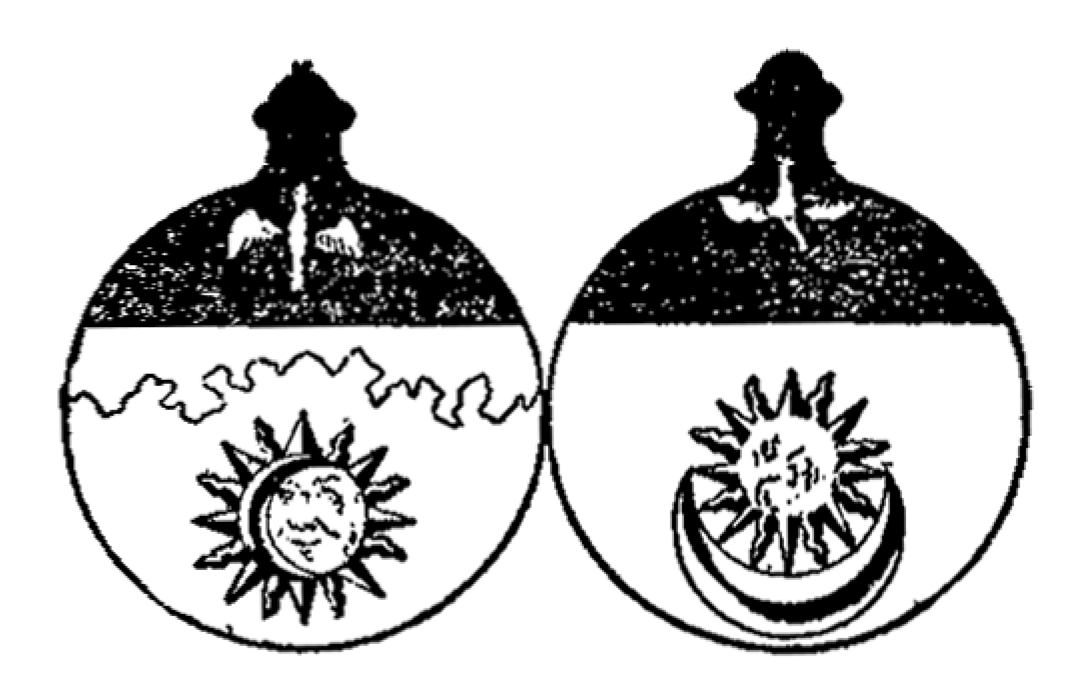
God spoke, light was made; it departed from its limb, and was placed in the most elevated region. Then the shadows disappeared before it; chaos and confusion gave place to order, night to day, and, to speak thus, nothingness to existence.

God spoke a second time; the confused Elements were separated, the lightest took their abode above and the heaviest below; then the earth, freed from its damp abysses appeared, became capable of producing all.

This Separation of the Water from the Earth where Air existed and Fire was diffused, is only a successive change of Matter under this double form;[63] which has caused Philosophers to say that Water is the whole foundation of the Work, without which the Earth could not be dissolved, corrupted, prepared, and that the Earth is the body in which the Humid Elements end, congeal and are burned, so to speak, to assumed a more noble existence.

Then a Circulation is made, the first movement of which sublimates matter by rarefying it; the second thickens it by congealing; and the whole is finally terminated in a kind of repose, or rather internal movement, and insensible concoction of Matter.

The first wheel of this rotation of the Elements, as d'Espagnet calls it, consists in the Reduction of Matter to Water, in which generation begins; the eclipse of the Sun and the Moon then takes place. The second wheel is an Evacuation of the superfluous humidity, and a Coagulation of Matter, under the form of a viscous and metallic Earth; the third wheel causes the Separation and Rectification of substances; the Waters are separated from the Waters. All is spiritualized, or volatilized; the Sun and Moon resume their brightness; and Light begins to appear on Earth. The fourth wheel is the Creation of Sulphur.



[63] That of Water and Earth.

The author we have just quoted says: “The first digestion operateth the solution of the Body, whereby comes the first conjunction of male and female, the commixtion of both seeds, putrefaction, the resolution of the elements into homogeneous water, the eclipse of the Sun and Moon in the head of the Dragon, and lastly it bringeth back the whole World into its ancient Chaos, and dark abyss. This first digestion is as in the stomach, of a melon colour and weak, more fit for corruption than generation. In the second digestion the Spirit of the Lord walketh upon the waters; the light begins to appear, and a separation of waters from the waters occurs; Sol and Luna are renewed; the elements are extracted out of the chaos, that being perfectly mixed in Spirit they may constitute a new world; a new Heaven and new Earth are made; and lastly all bodies become spiritual. The Crow’s young ones changing their feathers begin to pass into Doves; the Eagle and Lion embrace one another in an eternal League of amity. And this generation of the World is made by the fiery Spirit descending in the form of Water, and wiping away Original sin; for the Philosophers’ Water is Fire, which is moved by the exciting heat of a Bath. But see the separation of Waters be done in Weight and Measure, lest those things that remain under Heaven be drowned under the Earth, or those things that are snatched up above the Heaven, be too much destitute of aridity. The third digestion of the newly generated Earth drinketh up the dewy Milk, and all the spiritual virtues of the quintessence, and fasteneth the quickening Soul to the body by the Spirit’s mediation. Then the Earth layeth up a great treasure in itself, and is made like the coruscating Moon, afterwards like to the ruddy Sun; the former is called the Earth of the Moon, the latter the Earth of the Sun; for both of them are begot of the copulation of them both; neither of them any longer feareth the pains of Fire, because both want all spots; for they have been often cleansed from sin by fire, and have suffered great Martyrdom, until all the Elements are turned downwards. The Fourth digestion consummateth all the Mysteries of the World, and the Earth being turned into most excellent leaven, it leaveneth all imperfect bodies because it hath before passed into the heavenly nature of quintessence. The virtue thereof flowing from the Spirit of the Universe is a present Panacea and universal medicine for all the diseases of all creatures. The digestions of the first work being repeated will open to thee the Philosophers’ Secret Furnace.”[64]

The entire Philosophical process consists in the solution of the body and the congelation of the Spirit, and both of these are made by one operation. The Fixed and the Volatile are closely mixed, but this cannot be done unless the Fixed is first volatilized. They finally embrace, and by reduction they become absolutely fixed.

The operative principles which are called also the Keys of the Work, or the Regimen, are four in number; the first is Solution, or Liquefaction; the second Ablution; the third Reduction, and the fourth Fixation. By Solution bodies return to their First Matter, and become crude again by Coction. Then the marriage of the male and female is made, and the Crow is born. The Stone is resolved into four Elements, which are confounded; the Heaven and the Earth unite to give birth to Saturn. Ablution teaches to whiten the Crow[65] and to cause Jupiter to be born of Saturn: this is done by the changing of body into Spirit. The function of Reduction, is to return to the body its spirit of which it has been deprived by volatilization, and to nourish it then on a spiritual Milk, in the form of dew, until the little Jupiter has acquired perfect strength.

“During these last two operations, says d’Espagnet, the Dragon descends from Heaven, becomes infuriated against itself; it devours its tail, and swallows itself little by little, until at last it is changed into stone.” Such was the Dragon of which Homer speaks,(*Illiad, b. 2 v. 306 and following*); it is the true image, or symbol, of these two operations. “While we were assembled under a beautiful plane-tree, says Ulysses to the Greeks, for the purpose of making hecatombs, near a fountain which issued from that tree, there appeared a wonderful prodigy. A horrible Dragon, with a spotted back, sent by Jupiter himself, came out of the base of the altar and ran up the plane-tree. In the top of this tree were eight little sparrows with their mother flying around them. The Dragon seized them furiously and

[64] Translation by W. Wyne Westcott. *Loco Cit*.
[65] The Crow becomes the Dove. – *Stanislas de Guaïta.*

even the mother, who mourned the loss of her little ones. After this action the same god who had sent the monster rendered it beautiful, brilliant, and changed it into a stone before our astonished eyes." I leave it to the reader to make the application.

Operation Principles in Particular

Calcination

Common Calcination is simply the death and the mortification of the Mixt, by the separation of the Spirit, or moisture, which bound its parts. It is, properly speaking, a pulverization of fire, and a reduction of the body into lime, ashes, earth, flowers, etc.

Philosophical Calcination is an extraction of the substance of water, of salt, of oil, of the spirit and the rest of earth, and a change of accidents, an alteration of quantity, a corruption of the substance, yet in such a manner that all these separate things may reunite so as to form a more perfect body. Common Calcination is made by the action of the fire of our cooking-stoves, or of the concentrated rays of the Sun; Water is the agent of Philosophical Calcination; for this reason the Philosophers say: *Chemists burn with fire, and we burn with water*; whence one must conclude that common chemistry is as different from Hermetic Chemistry , as fire from water.

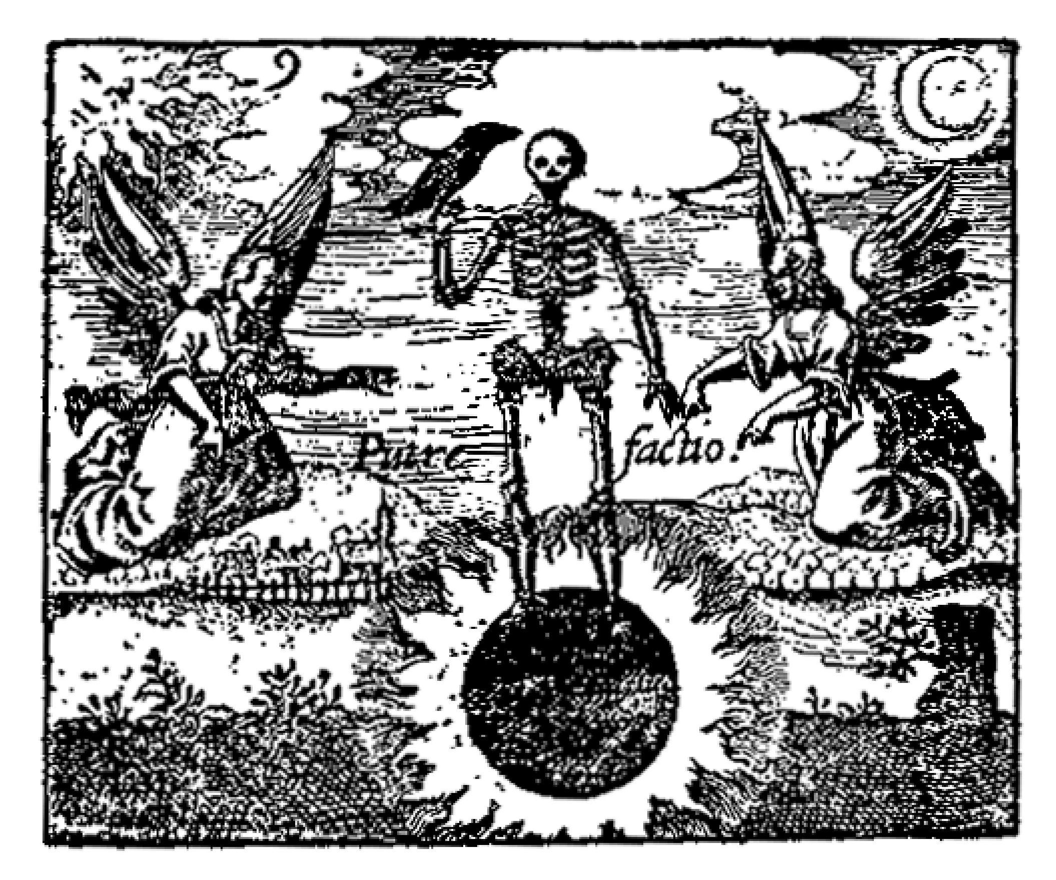
Solution

Solution, chemically speaking, is an attenuation, or liquifaction of matter under the form of water, of oil, of spirit, or humour. But Philosophical Solution is a reduction of the body to its First Matter, or a natural separation of the parts of the Composite, and a coagulation of the spiritual parts. This is why Philosophers call it a Solution of the body and a Congelation of the spirit. Its effect is to liquify, to dissolve, to open, to render crude, to thin and to free substances of their terrestrial parts, to dematerialize the Mixt, to convert it into sperm.

Putrefaction

Putrefaction is, we may say, the key of all the operations, although it is not, properly speaking, the first. It reveals to us the interior of the Mixt: it is the instrument which breaks the bonds of the parts; it renders, as Philosophers say, the occult manifest. It is the principle of the mutation of forms, the death of the accidentals, the first step to generation, the beginning and the end of life; the mean between the existent and the non-existent.

The Philosopher expects it when the body, dissolved by a natural Resolution, is submitted to the action of putrefying heat. Distillation and Sublimation have been invented only in imitation of these processes of Nature in regard to the Elements, the inclination or disposition of which to become rarified and to ascend, and to become condensed and to descend, causes all the mixtures and productions of Nature.



Distillation differs from sublimation, in that the former is made by the elevation of humid things, which are then distilled drop by drop, instead of the Sublimation and elevation of a dry matter which is attached to the vessel. Both of these are common.

Distillation and Sublimation, philosophically speaking, are a cleansing, subtlization, rectification of matter.

Coagulation and Fixation are the two great instruments of Nature and of Art.

Fermentation

The ferment is, in the Work, what the leaven is in the making of bread. One cannot make bread without leaven, and one cannot make gold without gold. Therefore gold is the soul which determines the intrinsic form of the Stone. Let us not be ashamed to learn to make gold and silver, as the baker makes bread, which is only a composition of water and kneaded flour, fermented, which differs from the first only by baking. So the golden medicine is only a composition of Earth and Water, that is to say, of Sulphur and Mercury fermented with gold; but with a virgin gold. For as one cannot make leaven with baked bread, so one cannot make a ferment with common gold so long as it remains common gold.

Mercury, or Mercurial Water, is that water; Sulphur that flour, which by a long fermentation, becomes sour and are made into leaven, with which Gold and Silver are made. And as the leaven may be multiplied eternally, and may serve always as a material for making bread, so the Philosophical Medicine may also be multiplied, and serve eternally as the leaven for making Gold.



Demonstrative Signs or Principles

The colours which appear in the Philosophical Matter during the course of the operations of the work are the demonstrative signs which inform the Artist as to whether he has proceeded in the right manner. They succeed each other immediately and in order; if this order is disturbed, it is a proof that one has worked in the wrong way. There are three principal colours; the first is black, called the Head of the Crow, and many other names which we have given the article, entitled: *Key of the Work*.

The beginning of this blackness indicates that the Fire of nature begins to operate, and that the Matter is being dissolved; when this black colour is perfect, the Solution is perfect also, and the Elements are confounded. The grain rots in order to be disposed for generation. “He who does not know how to render the matter black cannot whiten it, says Artephius, because blackness is the beginning of the whiteness, and is the mark of putrefaction and of alteration. It is made thus. In the Putrefaction which is made in our Water, there appears first a blackness which resembles a greasy broth, on which pepper has been sprinkled. This liquor being then thickened becomes as a black earth; it turns white by continued coction . . . and, just as heat, acting on the *humidum* produces blackness, which is the first colour to appear, so continued heat produces the whiteness which is the second principle of the Work.”

This action of Fire on the *humidum* does everything in the work, as in Nature, for the generation of the Mixts. Ovid says :

Ubi temperiem sumpsere humorque calorque
Concipiunt: et ab his oriuntur concta duobus. –
Metam. B.I.

During this Putrefaction the philosophic male or Sulphur is confounded with the female, so they form only one body which Philosophers call Hermaphrodite; "This is, says Flamel, (*Loco cit.*), the Androgyna of the ancients, the Head of the Crow, and the converted Elements. in this manner, I represent to thee, that thou hast two natures reconciled, which may form an embryo in the matrix of the Vessel, and may give birth to a very powerful, incorruptible, invincible King . . . Our Matter in this state is the serpent Python, which having been born from the corruption of the clay of the earth, must be put to death, and conquered by the arrows of the god Apollo, by the fair Sun, that is to say, by our Fire, equal to that of the Sun. These often repeated cleansings with the other half, are the teeth of this serpent which the wise operator, the prudent Cadmus, will sow in the same Earth, whence will spring soldiers who will destroy each other, and be resolved into this same kind of earth. . . Jealous Philosophers have called this confection REBIS, and also *Numus, Ethelia, Arena, Boritis, Corsufle, Cambar, Albar, Æris, Bauderic, Kukul, Thabitris, Ebisemeth, Ixir, etc.*, it is this which they have designated as the matter 'to be whitened". I have spoken at length of this blackness in the article on OPERATIVE PRINCIPLES. The reader may refer to this.

The second demonstrative sign, or the second principal colour, is white. Hermès says, (*VII Chap.*): Know, Son of Science, that the Vulture cries from the mountain top, I am the White from the Black; because whiteness succeeds the blackness. Morien calls this whiteness white Smoke. Alphidius teaches us that this matter, or this white Smoke, is the root of Art, and the Quicksilver of the Sages. Philalethes, (*Narrat. Method. p. 36*), assures us that Quicksilver is the true Mercury of the Philosophers. "This Quicksilver, says he, extracted from this very subtle blackness is the tingent[66] Mercury of the Philosophers, with its white and red Sulphur naturally mixed in their mine."

The Philosophers have given it, among other names, those which follow:

White Copper, Lamb, Spotless Lamb, Aibathest, Whiteness, Alborach, Holy Water, Heavy Water, Talc, Argent-vive, Coagulated Mercury, Purified Mercury, Silver, Zoticon, Arsenic, Orpiment, Gold, White Gold, Azoch, Baurach, Borax, Ox, Cambar, Caspa, Ceruse, Wax, Chaia, Comerisson, White Body, Corps improprement dit, December, E, Electra, Essence, White Essence, Euphrates, Eve, Fada, Favonius, Foundation of Art, Precious Stone of Givinis, Diamond, Lime, White Gum, Hermaphrodite, Hœ, Hypostase, Hyle, Enemy, Insipid Milk, Virgin's Milk, Known Stone, Mineral Stone, Unique Stone, Moon, Full Moon, White Magnesia, Alum, Mother, Unique Matter of Metals, Preparatory Mean, Menstrum, Setting Mercury, Oil, Oleum vivum, Vegetable, Egg, Phlegm, White of Egg, Point, Root, Root of Art, Unique Root, Rebis, Salt, Alkali Salt, Salt Alebrot, Salt Alembroth, Fusible Salt, Salt of Nature, Mineral Salt, Salt of the Metals, Soap of the Wise,(*Sapo Sapientiæ*)*, Seb, Secondine, Sedine, Old Age, Seth, Serinech, Fugitive Serf, Left Hand, Companion, Sister, Sperm of the Metals, Spirit, Tin, Sublimate, Juice, Sulphur, White Sulphur, Unctious Sulphur, Earth, Terre Feuillée, Fertile Earth, Potential Earth, Field in which the Gold must be sown, Teros, Tincar, Vapour, Evening Star, Wind, Virago, Glass, Glass of Pharaoh, Twenty-one, Vulture, Zibach, Ziva, Veil, White Veil, Narcissus, Lily, White Rose, Calcined Bone, Egg-shell, etc.*

Artephius says that the whiteness arises from the soul of the body floating on the water as a white cream; and that the Spirits are then so closely united, that they cannot flee away, because they have lost their volatility.

[66] Tingent, viz, proper to communicate to imperfect metals the permanent colour of either gold or silver. E.B.

The great secret of the Work, therefore, is to whiten the Latten and to leave all books alone, so as not to be embarrassed by reading them, for this reading could give rise to ideas of useless and expensive work. This whiteness is the Perfect White Stone; it is a precious body, which when it has been fermented and has become white Elixir, is full of an exuberant Tincture which it has the property of communicating to all the other metals. The Spirits, at first volatile, become fixed. The next body is resuscitated beautiful, white, immortal, victorious. This is why it has been called *Resurrection, Light, Day,* and all other names which can indicate whiteness, fixity, and incorruptibility.

Flamel has represented this colour in his Hieroglyphic Figures, by a woman surrounded by a white roll, to show, says he, “that REBIS will begin to whiten in this same manner, whitening first at the extremities, then all around this white circle. The Ladder of Philosophers (*Scala Philosoph*.) says: The sign of the first part of the Whiteness, is when one sees a certain little capillary circle, that is to say, one passing over the head, which will appear around the matter on the sides of the Vessel, in a colour approaching orange.”

The Philosophers, according to the same Flamel, have represented this Whiteness under the figure of a glittering sword. “When thou wilt have bleached, adds the same author, thou has conquered the enchanted Bulls who threw from their nostrils fire and smoke. Hercules has cleansed the stables full of filth and blackness. Jason has poured the liquor upon the Dragon of Colchis and thou hast in thy power the Horn of Amalthœa which, so long as it is white, can cover all the rest of thy life with glory, honour and riches. In order to obtain it, thou must have fought valiantly, and as a Hercules for this Achelous, this humid river (which blackness, the black water of the river Esep), is endowed with a very great strength, moreover it often changes from one to another.”

As Black and White are, to speak thus, two extremes, and as two extremes can be united only by a mean, the matter on leaving the black colour, does not become white immediately; the grey colour is intermediate because it participates of the nature of both.

Philosophers have given to it the name of Jupiter, because it succeeds the black which they have called Saturn. This has caused d’Espagnet to say, that the Air succeeds the Water after it has finished its seven revolutions, which Flamel has called *Imbibitions*[67]. The matter, adds d’Espagnet, being fixed in the bottom of the Vase, Jupiter, after having put Saturn to flight, takes possession of the kingdom, and assumes its government. At his advent the Philosophical Child is formed, is nourished in the matrix, and finally is born with a face beautiful, brilliant and white as the moon. Therefore this white Matter is a universal remedy for all the maladies of the human body.

Finally the third principal colour is Red. It is the completion and the perfection of the Stone. This redness is obtained simply by the continuation of the coction of the Matter. After the first work, it is called *Masculine Sperm, Philosophic Gold, Fire of the Stone, Royal Crown, Son of the Sun, Mine of Celestial Fire.*

We have already said that most of the Philosophers begin their Treatises on the Work with the Red Stone. Those who read these works, could not pay too much attention to this; for it is a source of errors for them, as much because they cannot divine in what manner the Philosophers then speak, as because the operations and the proportions, of the matters, which are in the second work, and the making of the Elixir, are very different from those of the first. Although Morien assures us that the second operation is only a repetition of the first, yet it is well to notice, that what they call Fire, Air, Earth and Water, in one instance, are not the same things as those to which they give the same names

[67] IMBIBITION, or cohobation, or Sublimation, is the time of the operation when the Matter gives off vapours which condensng fall as a rain upon the Sophic Earth remainging the bottom of the Vessel and moistens it, until it is perfectly saturated. Pernety. – *Dict. Mytho-Herm.*

in the other. Their Mercury is called Mercury in its liquid form as well as in its dry form. For example, those who read Alphidius imagine, when he calls the Matter of the Work, *Red Mine*, that it is necessary to seek a red matter for the beginning of the operations; consequently some work on cinnabar, others on minium, or red lead, others on orpiment, (Auripigment), others on iron rust, because they do not know that this red mineral is the perfect Red Stone, and that Alphidius begins his work only with this. But in order that those who will read this work and who will wish to operate may not be deceived, we give many of the names which this Red Stone bears:

Acid, Sharpness, Adam, Aduma, Almagra, Altum, Alzernard, Soul, Ram, Gold, Quick-Gold, Altered Gold, Cancer, Cadmic, Camerith, Bile, Chibur, Ashes, Ashes of Tartar, Corsufle, Body, Body properly speaking, Red Body, Right, Déeb, Déhab, Summer, Iron, Form, Form of Man, Brother, Fruit, Cock, Cock's Comb, Gabricus, Gabrius, Gophrith, Ethiopian Grain, Gum, Red Gum, Hageralzarnad, Man, Fire, Fire of Nature, Infinity, Youth, Hebrit, Stone, Indian Stone, Indrademe Stone, Lasule Stone, Red Stone, Golden Litharge, Red Litharge, Light, Morning, Mars, Marteck, Male, Red Magnesia, Metros, Mine, Neusis, Oil of Mars, Incombustible Oil, Red Oil, Olive, Perpetual Olive, Orient, Father, A Part, Starry Stone, Phison, King, Réezon, Residence, Redness, Ruby, Salt, Red Salt, Germ, Sericon, Sun, Sulphur, Red Sulphur, Quick Sulphur, Tamné, Third, Thirteenth, Red Earth, Theriac, Thelima, Thion, Thita, Toarech, Vare, Vein, Blood, Poppy, Red Wine, Wine, Virago, Yolk of Egg, Red Vitriol, Chalcitis, Colchotar, Cochineal, Glass, Zaaph, Zahau, Zit, Zumech, Zumelazuli, etc.

But all these names were not given to it for the same reason; the authors, in these different denominations, have considered it sometimes in regard to its colour, sometimes in regard to its qualities. For example, those who have called this Matter: Red Stone, Acid, Adam, Summer, Almagra, Soul, Ram, Gold, Cancer, Camereth, Ashes of Tartar, Corsufle, Déeb, Brother, Fruit, Cock, Youth, Kibrit, Indrademic Stone, Marteck, Male, Father, Sun, Third, Neusis, Olive, Thion, Glass, Zaaph, have named it thus because of its change of constitution. Those who have considered only its colour, have called it Red Gum, Red Oil, Ruby, Sericon, Red Sulphur, Yolk of Egg, Red Vitriol, etc.

"In this operation of Rubification, says Flamel, as long as thou soakest, thou wilt have little black, but much of violet, of blue and of the colour of the peacock's tail: for our Stone is so triumphant in dryness, that as soon as thy mercury touches it, Nature, rejoicing in its nature, is joined to it and drinks it up eagerly; and thus the blackness which comes from humidity, can show itself only a little, under these violet and blue colours, so long as the dryness governs absolutely . . . But remember to begin the Rubification by the apposition of Orange-red Mercury; but it is necessary to pour but little of it in, and only once or twice, according to what thou wilt see: for this operation must be made by dry fire, sublimation and dry calcination. And, in truth, I reveal here a secret which thou wilt find very rarely written."

In this operation the Fixed Body becomes Volatile, it mounts and descends while circulating in the Vase until the Fixed having conquered the Volatile, it precipitates it to the bottom with itself, so as to make only one body of a nature absolutely fixed. What we have quoted from Flamel must be applied to the Elixir, of which we will speak hereafter; but the operations of the first Work, or the manner of making Philosophical Sulphur, are thus described by d'Espagnet, (*Lumen. 109*): "Choose a red, courageous Dragon, which has lost none of its natural strength: then seven or nine bold, virgin Eagles, whose eyes cannot be dazzled by the rays of the Sun: place them with the Dragon in a transparent prison, well closed, and upon a warm bath, to excite them to combat. They will not delay to grapple one another; the combat will be long and very painful until the forty-fifth or fiftieth day[68] ,

[68] "The days of the Hermetic Chemists are reckoned differently and are not the same as our common days. Pliny says that their year consists only in one month; some say an ordinary month; some others a lunary month; and others still, an Egyptian Month - Pernety

"Philosophers have established time of different duration for the concoction of our Art. Some ones have spoken of a year; others of a month, others of three days, and still others of one day. But in the same manner as we call *day*, the length of time

when the Eagles will begin to devour the Dragon. The latter, in dying, will infect the entire prison with its corrupt blood, and with a very black poison. The Eagles being unable to resist the violence of this poison will expire also. From the putrefaction of their corpses will be born a Crow, who will lift its head little by little; and by the augmentation of the bath, it will unfold its wings and will begin to fly; the wind and the clouds will carry it here and there; weary with being thus tormented, it will seek to escape; therefore be careful, lest it find an issue. Finally wash and whiten by a constant rain of long duration, and by a celestial dew, it will be metamorphosed into a Swan. The birth of the Crow will indicate to you the death of the Dragon.

if you are curious to proceed to the red colour, add the Element of Fire which is lacking to the whiteness: without touching or moving the Vase, but by strengthening the fire by degrees, press its action on the Matter until the occult becomes manifest, the indication will be the lemon colour. Then govern the fire of the fourth degree, always by the required gradation, until by the aid of Vulcan, you see the red roses open, which will change into amaranths, the colour of blood. But do not cease to make the fire act by fire until you see the whole reduced to very red, impalpable ashes."

The Philosophical Sulphur is an earth of an extreme tenuity, igneity and dryness. It contains a fire of a very abundant nature, this is why it has been called *Fire of the Stone*. It has the property of opening, of penetrating the bodies of the metals, and of changing them into its own nature: consequently it is called *Father* and *Masculine Germ*.

The three colours Black, White and Red, must succeed each other in the order in which we have described them. They indicate the essential changes which the Matter undergoes: while the other colours which are almost infinite in number and similar to those of the rainbow, are only transient and of a very short duration. These are the kind of vapours which affect the Air rather than the Earth, which drive each other away, and which are scattered to make room for the three principal colours of which we have spoken.

Yet these foreign colours are sometime signs of a mistaken *regimen*, and of a badly conducted operation; the continued blackness is a certain mark of error; for the little crows, so says d'Espagnet, (*Can. 66*), must not return to the nest after having left it. The premature redness is also a mark of failure; for it must appear only at the end, as a proof of the maturity of the grain, and of the time of harvest.

Of the Elixir

It is not enough to have arrived at the Philosophic Sulphur, which we have just described; most alchemists have been decieved in this, and have abandoned the Work in this state, believing to have carried it to perfection. Ignorance of the processes of Nature and Art is the cause of this error. In vain would one attempt to make the Projection with this Sulphurous Stone, in the red state. The Philosopher's Stone can not be perfect until the end of the second work which is called *Elixir*.

which the Sun uses to travel from east to west, the Sages have called *day* the interval which separates the beginning from the end of the operation. Those who speak of a month, have reference to the course of the Sun in one sign of the Zodiac. Those who mention three days consider the beginning, the middle and the end of the Work: and those who fix the time at one year have in view the succession of the four colours emblematical of the four seasons of the year." Anonymous, quoted by Pernety, *Dict.-Mytho.-Herm.*



From this first sulphur one makes a second, which one can then multiply infinitely. One must then carefully preserve this first mine of celestial fire, for the required use.

The Elixir, according to d'Espagnet, is composed of a triple matter, namely, of a metallic Water, or Mercury philosophically sublimated, of the white Ferment, if one wishes to make the White Elixir, or of the red Ferment, for the Red Elixir, and finally of the second Sulphur; the whole according to philosophical weights and proportions. The Elixir must have five qualities; it must be fusible, permanent, penetrating, *tingent* and *multiplying*; it derives its tincture and its fixation from the Ferment; its fusibility from the argent-vive, which serves as the mean to unite the tinctures of the Ferment and the Sulphur; and its multiplicative property comes from the spirit of the Quintessence which it naturally possesses.

The two perfect metals give a perfect Tincture, because they derive their tincture from the pure Sulphur of Nature; therefore its Ferment must not be sought elsewhere than in these two bodies. Thus colour your white Elixir with the Moon, and the red with the Sun. Mercury, first receives this Tincture, and then communicates it. Be careful not to be mistaken in the mixture of the Ferments, and do not take one for the other, you would lose all. This second Work is made in the same *Vas Philosophorum*, or in a Vessel similar to the first, in the same furnace, and with the same degrees of fire; but it is much shorter.

The perfection of the Elixir consists in the marriage and perfect union of the *Siccum* and *Humidum*, so that they are inseparable, and so that the *Humidum* gives to the *Siccum* the property of being fusible at the least heat. Proof of this may be made by placing a small quantity of it upon a heated copper or iron plate, if it melts immediately without smoke, you have obtained that which you sought for.

Operation of the Elixir according to d'Espagnet

"Red Earth, or Red Ferment, three parts; Water and Air, taken together, six parts; mix the whole, and grind so as to make an amalgam, or metallic paste, of the consistency of butter, in such a manner that the Earth may be impalpable, or insensible to the touch; add to it a part and a half of Fire, and place the whole in a Vase, which you will seal closely. Give to it a fire of the first degree[69] for the digestion; you will then make the extraction of the Elements by the degrees of fire suitable to them, until they are all reduced to fixed Earth. The Matter will become as a brilliant, transparent red Stone, and will then be in its perfect state. Take from it any desired quantity, place it in a crucible, over a moderate fire, and soak this part with its red oil, saturating it, drop by drop, until it melts and runs without smoke. Do not fear that your Mercury will evaporate; for the Earth will drink up eagerly that humour which is of its own species. You have then in your possession your perfect Elixir. Thank God for the favour accorded to you; make use of it for His glory, and keep the secret."

The White Elixir is made in the same manner as the Red; but with the white Ferments and white oil.

Quintessence

The quintessence is an extraction of the most spiritual and radical substance of Matter; it is made by the separation of the Elements which end in a celestial and incorruptible essence, freed from all heterogeneities. Aristotle calls it a very pure substance, incorporated in a certain manner, not mixed with parts accidental to its nature. Heraclitus calls it a celestial essence which takes its name from the place of its origin. Paracelsus named it, the being of our central heaven; Pliny, a corporeal essence, yet separated from all materiality, and freed from commerce with Matter. It has been called consequently, a Spiritual Body, or a Corporeal Spirit, made of an Ethereal substance. All these qualities have caused the name Quintessence to be given to it. This name signifies a fifth substance, which results from the union of the purest parts of the Elements. The Philosophical Secret consists in separating the Elements from the Mixts, in order to rectify them, and by the union of their pure homogeneous and spiritualized parts, to make this Quintessence, which contains all their properties without being subject to their alterations.

The Tincture

[69] The Fire of the first degree is like that of the hen when hatching her eggs, or like the natural head digesting the food to convert it into the substances of the body, or like that of horse-dung, or, in fine, similar to that of the Sun in Aries. It is why several Philosophers have recommended to begin the Work when the Sun enters this Sign and the Moon into the constellation of Taurus. This degree of heat must last until the Matter has asssumed the white colour; as soon as the Stone bleaches, one must gradually raise the temperature until the perfect desiccation of the Stone: this temperature is equal to that of the Sun when it passes from Taurus into Gemini. The Stone having been desiccated and reduced into ashes, one augments the degree of heat until the Matter becomes perfectly red and clothes the Royal Mantle. This degree of temperature is the same as that of the Sun in Leo, (*Scala Philosophorum*). The *Rosarium* says: The temperature of your fire must be that of the heat of the Sun in July; so that by a moderate and long coction your Water thickens and changes into a black Earth. In regard to the gradual augmentation of the degree of heat spoken of above, in *Scala Philosophorum*, we believe it important to add the remark of Pernety in *Dict.-Mytho.-Herm.* P.221: "We must observe that when Philosophers speak of the degrees of heat to dispense to their matter, *they do not understand* that the fire should be intensified or diminished as commonly done by ordinary chemists in their furnaces by mean of dampers, bellows, or a greater quantity of charcoal; but that the intensity of the *secret fire of the Matter* should be augmented bya more active digestion; in proportion that matter becomes more fixed, its fire augments gradually, and its degrees are appreciated by the colours which the matter assumes. E.B.

When those ignorant of Hermetic Philosophy, read the term *Tincture*, in the works which treat of this Science, they imagine that it relates simply to the colour of the metals, as orange for gold, and white for silver. And, as it is said, in these same works, that Sulphur is the principle of the Tincture; one works to extract this sulphur by aqua fortis, aqua regia, by calcination and the other operations of common chemistry. This is not the idea of the Philosophers, either, in regard to the operations, or to the Tincture itself. The Tincture of gold, cannot be separated from its body, because it is the soul of it; and because one could not extract it without destroying the body; which is not possible for common chemistry, as all who have tried this experiment, very well know.

The Tincture, in the Philosophical sense, is the Elixir itself, rendered fixed, fusible, penetrating and *tingent*, by the corruption and the other operations of which we have spoken. This Tincture, therefore, does not consist in the external colour, but in the substance itself, which gives the Tincture with the metallic form. It acts as saffron in water; it penetrates even more than oil on paper; it blends as wax with wax, as water with water, because union is made between two things of the same nature. It is this property which renders it an admirable Panacea, for all the maladies of the three kingdoms of Nature; its seeks in them, the radical and vital principle, which it relieves of the heterogeneous parts which embarrass it, and hold it in prison, it comes to the aid of this principle, and unites with it to fight its enemies. They act when in concert, and win a perfect victory. This Quintessence drives off the impurity of bodies, just as fire causes the humidity of wood to evaporate, it preserves their health, giving to the principle of life, strength to resist the attacks of diseases, and the property of separating the truly nutritive substance of the food, from its vehicle.

The Multiplication

One understands by Philosophical multiplication an augmentation both in quantity and quality beyond what one can imagine. That of quality is a multiplication of the Tincture by a corruption, a volatilization and a fixation reiterated as often as it may please the Artist. The second Multiplication augments the quantity of the Tincture without increasing its virtues.

The second Sulphur is multiplied with the same matter from which it has been made, by adding to it a small part of the first, according to the required weights and measures. Yet there are three methods of making the Multiplication, if we are to believe d'Espagnet, who describes them in the following manner: The first is to take *one* part of the perfect Red Elixir, and mix it with *nine* parts of its Red Water; place the Vessel in the bath, so as to make the whole dissolve in water. After the solution, one cooks this water until it coagulates into a matter similar to a ruby; one then inserts this Matter in the manner of the Elixir; and from this first operation, the Medicine acquires ten times more virtue than it possessed. If this same process is repeated a second time, the Medicine will be augmented a hundredfold, a third time a thousandfold, and so on always by ten.

The second method is to mix the desired quantity of the Elixir with its Water, while keeping the proportion between them, and after having placed the whole in a reducing Vase well sealed, to dissolve it in the bath, and to follow all the regimen of the second, distilling the elements successively by their own fires, until the whole becomes Stone. Then one inserts as in the other, and the virtue of the Elixir increases a hundred fold the first time; but this way is longer. One repeats it as the first, to increase its strength.

Finally the third Multiplication is, properly speaking, the multiplication of quantity. One throws an ounce of the Elixir multiplied in quality, on one hundred ounces of common mercury purified; this Mercury placed over a slow fire will soon change into Elixir. If an ounce of this new Elixir is thrown upon a hundred ounces of other common Mercury purified, it will become very find gold. The

Multiplication of the white Elixir is made in the same manner, by taking the white Elixir and its water, instead of the red Elixir.

The more one will repeat the Multiplication in quality, the more effect it will have in the projection; but not so of the third manner of multiplying of which we have spoken; for its force diminishes at each projection. Yet one cannot carry this reiteration beyond the fourth or fifth time, because the Medicine would then be so active and so igneous that the operations would become instantaneous, since their duration is shortened at each reiteration; moreover its virtue is great enough at the fourth or fifth time to satisfy the desires of the Artist, since at the first one grain can convert one hundred grains of mercury into gold, at the second a thousand, at the third ten thousand, at the fourth one hundred thousand, etc. One must judge of this Medicine as of the grain, which is multiplied each time that it is sown.

Of the Weights in the Work

Nothing is more confused than the Weights and proportions required in the Philosophical Work. All the Authors speak of them, and not one explains them clearly. One says that it is necessary to measure his fire *clibanically*[70] (Flamel). Another geometrically, (d'Espagnet and Artephius). The latter according to the heat of the sun, from spring to autumn; the former says that a fever heat is necessary, etc. But Trévisan advises us to give a slow fire, because then one only runs the risk of finishing the Work a little late, while in forcing the fire one is in evident danger of losing all.

The composition and life of the Mixts is continued only by the Measure and Weight of the Elements, so combined and proportioned that one does not rule tyranically over the others; if there is too much Fire the germ is burned; if too much Water the seminal and radical Spirit is suffocated; if too much Air and Earth, the composite will have either too much or too little consistency, and each element will not be free in its action.

Yet this difficulty is not so great, as it appears from the first reading of the Philosophers; some teach, (Trévisan) that Nature has always the balance in her hand, to weight these Elements, and to so proportion her mixtures, that there will always result from them the Mixt which she proposes to make; unless she is hindered in her operations, by the defect of the matrix in which she performs her operations, or by the defect of the germs which are furnished to her, or by other accidents. We see, even in common chemistry, that two heterogeneous bodies do not mix, or cannot remain long united; that when water has dissolved a certain quantity of salt, it does not dissolve more; that the more affinity bodies have, the more they seem to seek each other, even leaving a body for one for which they have more affinity. These experiments are known, especially between the minerals and the metals.

The Artist of the Great Work sets up Nature as his model. Therefore he must study this Nature in order to be able to imitate her. But how discover her weights and combinations? when she wishes to make some Mixt she does not call us to advise with her or to assist in her operations, either to see the constituent parts of that Mixt, or her work in combining them. The Hermetic Philosophers never weary in advising us to follow Nature; doubtless they know her since they claim to be her disciples. Therefore, from their works, one could learn to imitate her. But one says, (Artephius): "that only one thing is necessary to perfect the Work, that there is only one Stone, only one Medicine, only one Vessel, only one Regimen, only one Method of making successively the white and the red. Thus, although we should say, adds the author, use this, use that, we do not mean that it is necessary to take

[70] According to the proportion of the furnace. Flamel says, after Calid "if thy fire is not measured *Clibinically*; that is to say, with Weight and Measure of the matters, which are but the Sulphur and Mercury of the Philosophers, etc.
Pernety, *Dict.-Mytho.-Herm.*

more than one thing, to place it once in the Vessel, and to close it then until the Work is perfect and accomplished. . . .That the Artist has simply to prepare the matter as it should be externally, because it does of itself, internally, all that is necessary to render itself perfect. . . .Thus simply prepare and arrange the Matter, and Nature will do all the rest.”

Raymond Lully warns us that this unique thing, is not a single thing taken individually, but two things of the same nature, which form only one; if there are two or several things to mix, it must be done with Proportion, Weight and Measure. We have spoken of this in the article on DEMONSTRATIVE SIGNS, under the name of Eagle and Dragon; and we have also given the proportions of the matters required for the Multiplication. Thus one must see that the proportions of the matters are not the same in the first and second work.

Very instructive General Rules

It is scarcely ever necessary to take the words of the Philosophers literally; because all their terms have a double meaning, and because they employ those which are equivocal. When they make use of well known terms, used in ordinary language, (*Geber*, *d’Espagnet* and several others), the more they seem to speak simply, clearly and naturally, the more one must suspect artifice. *Timeo danaos, et dona ferentes*. On the contrary, in the places where they appear confused, obscure, and almost unintelligible, it is necessary to study with the greatest attention. The truth is concealed there.

In order to better discover this truth, it is necessary to compare the authors, to establish a concordance of their tests, because one may sometimes permit to escape, that which another has purposely omitted, (*Philalethes*). But in this selection of texts, one must be careful not to confound that which one says of the first preparation, with what another says of the third.

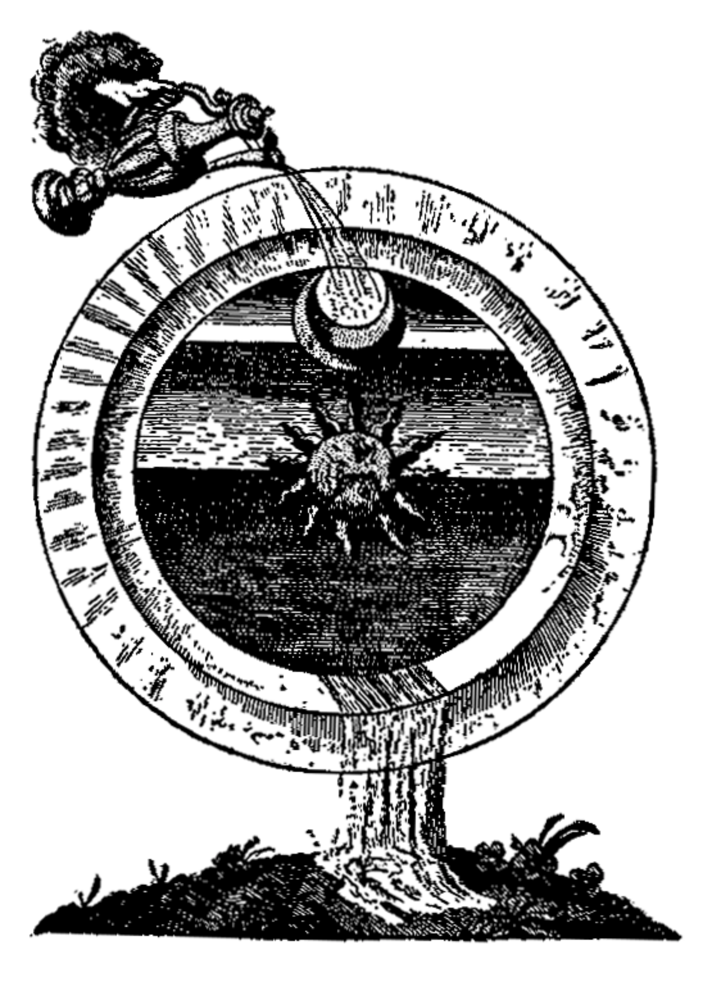
Before beginning the Work, one must have so combined all, that one may find nothing in the books of the Philosophers which cannot be explained, by the operations about to be undertaken, (*Zachaire*). For this purpose one must be assured of the Matter which must be employed; to see if it has really all the qualities and properties by which the Philosophers designate it, since they avow that they have not called it by the name under which it is commonly known. One must observe that this Matter costs nothing, or at least very little; that the Medicine, which Philalethes (*Enarr, Meth. Trium. Gebr. medic.*), according to Geber, called Medicine of the first order, or the first preparation, is perfected without much expense, in every place, in all times, by all classes of people, provided one has a sufficient quantity of Matter.

Nature perfects the Mixts only by things of the same nature, (*Cosmopolite*); therefore one must not take wood to perfect metal. The animal produces animal, the plant produces plant, and the metallic nature metals. The radical principles of the metal are a Sulphur and a Quicksilver, but not the common ones; these enter as complements, even as constituent principles, but as combustible principles, accidental and separable from the true radical principle which is fixed and unalterable. For information regarding Matter the reader is referred to the chapter in which that subject is treated according to the principles laid down by the Philosophers.

Each alteration of a Mixt is made by dissolution into water, or into powder, and it can be perfected only by the separation of the pure from the impure. Each conversion from one state to another is made by an agent and in a determined time. Nature always acts successively; the Artist must do the same.

The terms conversion, desiccation[71] , mortification, inspiration,[72] preparation, alteration signify the same thing in Hermetic Art. Sublimation, descension,[73] distillation, putrefaction, calcination, congelation, fixation, ceration,[74] are in themselves different things; but in the work, they constitute only

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one operation continued in the same Vase.



[71] DESICCATION. - Coagulation, or fixation of the mercurial moisture.

[72] INSPIRATION. - Operation which follows that of the dissolution of bodies. . . .The Inspiration requires a fire of the second degree.

[73] DESCENSION. - To distil per descension, is properly speaking, the filtration of liquors; but in Hermetic terminology, it means the circulation of the Matter, or the reiteration of the operations of the Great Work, for the multiplication of the quantity and the qualities of the Stone. *Pernety, dict.Mytho-Herm.*

[74] CERATION. – The time when Matter passes from the black colour to the gray and then to the white. *Pernety-Dict.Mytho-Herm.*

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The Philosophers have given all these names simply to the different phases, or changes which they have observed in the Vessel. When they have perceived the Matter exhale in subtle smoke, and mount to the top of the Vase, they have called this ascension, *Sublimation*. Then, seeing this vapour descend to the bottom of the Vase, they have named this *Descension, Distillation.* Consequently Morien says: Our entire operation consists in extracting the Water from its Earth, and in returning it until the Earth rots and putrifies. When they have perceived that this Water, mixed with its Earth, coagulated, or thickened, that it became black and ill-smelling: they have said that this was *Putrefaction*, the principle of generation. This putrefaction lasts until the Matter has become white.

This matter being black is reduced to powder, when it begins to turn gray; this appearance of ashes has given rise to the idea of Calcination, Inceration,[79] Incineration, Dealbation; and when it has reached a swan-like whiteness, they have called it *Perfect Calcination*. Seeing that the Matter assumed a sound consistency; that it no longer flowed, it has formed their *Congelation*, their *Induration*; this is why they have said that the entire Magisterium consists in naturally dissolving and coagulating.



This same Matter congealed, and hardened so that it will no longer dissolve in water, has called them to say, that it was necessary to dry it and to fix it; they, therefore, have given to this pretended operation the names, *Desiccation, Fixation, Ceration*, because they explain these terms by a perfect union of the volatile part with the fixed under the form of a powder, or white stone.

Therefore this operation must be regarded as unique, but expressed in different terms. One will know then that all the following expressions signify also the same thing: To distil per Alembic; to separate the soul from the body; to burn; to aquefy; to calcine; "*cérer*."[80], to give to drink; to adapt; to

[79] INCERATION, or *Imbibition*, or *Cohobation*, are almost synonymous terms for indicating that part of the Operation when the Matter, enclosed in the Sophic Egg, ascends in form of vapours tot eh superior part of the Vessel, where not finding an egress is compelled to fall upon itself, until Matter being fixed, all circulation ceases. *Pernety-Dict.Mytho-Herm*.

[80] See footnote, page 87 : *Ceration*.

force to eat; to unite; to correct; to sift; to tear with tenailles; to divide; to unite the elements; to extract them; to exalt them; to convert them; to change one into the other; to cut with the knife; to strike with the sword, to ax, the cimeter; to pierce with the lance, the javelin, the arrow; to kill; to crush; to bind; to unbind; to corrupt; "*folier*;"[81] to melt; to engender; to conceive; to place in the world; to exhaust; to moisten; to water; to soak; to impaste; to amalgamate; to bury; "*incérer*;[82] to wash; to wash with fire; to soften; to polish; to file; to beat with the hammer; to mortify; to blacken; to putrefy; to turn on the lathe; to circulate; to rubify; to dissolve; to sublimate; to wash in lye; to inhume; to resuscitate; to reverberate; to grind; to reduce to powder; to grind in the mortar; to pulverize on marble; and many other similar expressions; all this means simply to cook by a single *regimen*, until the appearance of the dark red colour. Therefore one must be careful not to move the Vase, and not to take it from the fire; for if the Matter should cool all would be lost.

Of the Virtue of the Medicine

It is according to all the Philosophers, the source of riches and health; since with it one can make gold and silver in abundance, and can not only cure all the diseases which can be cured, but can also, by its moderate use, prevent them. A single grain of this medicine, or red elixir, given to those suffering with paralysis, dropsy, gout, leprosy will cure them, provided they take the same quantity for several days. Epilepsy, colic, colds, inflammation, frenzy and all other internal maladies, are unable to resist this life principle. Some Adepts have said that it gave hearing to the deaf and sight to the blind; that it is a sure remedy for all kinds of diseases of the eye, all apostema,[83] ulcers, wounds, cancers, fistula, nolimétangère,[84] and all diseases of the skin, a grain being dissolved in a glass of wine or water, and then applied externally. That it dissolves little by little the stone in the bladder; that it drives away all venom and poison, when taken as above directed.

Raymond Lully, (*Testam. antiq.*) assures us that it is, in general, a sovereign remedy for all the ills, which afflict humanity; that it cures them in one day, if they have lasted a month; in twelve days, if a year; and in one month, of whatever duration they may be.

Arnaud de Villeneuve, (*Rosari.*), says that it is infinitely superior to all the remedies of Hippocrates, of Galen, of Alexander, of Avicenna, and to all ordinary medicine; that it rejoices the heart, gives vigor and strength, preserves youth, and retards old age. In general, that it cures all diseases.

Geber, (*Summâ*) without enumerating the maladies which this medicine cures, contents himself with saying that it conquers all those which ordinary Physicians regard as incurable. That it makes young

the old and keeps them in health, for many years, even beyond the ordinary limit, when they take only as much as a mustard seed of it, two or three times a week, before the first meal.

Philalethes, (*Introit. apert. et enarrat. method.*), adds that it cleanses the skin of all blemishes, wrinkles, etc., that it delivers a woman in travail, when held to her nose in the form of powder, and he quotes Hermès as proof. He claims himself to have drawn from the arms of death many abandoned by physicians. The manner of using it may be found in the works of Raymond Lully and Arnaud de Villeneuve.

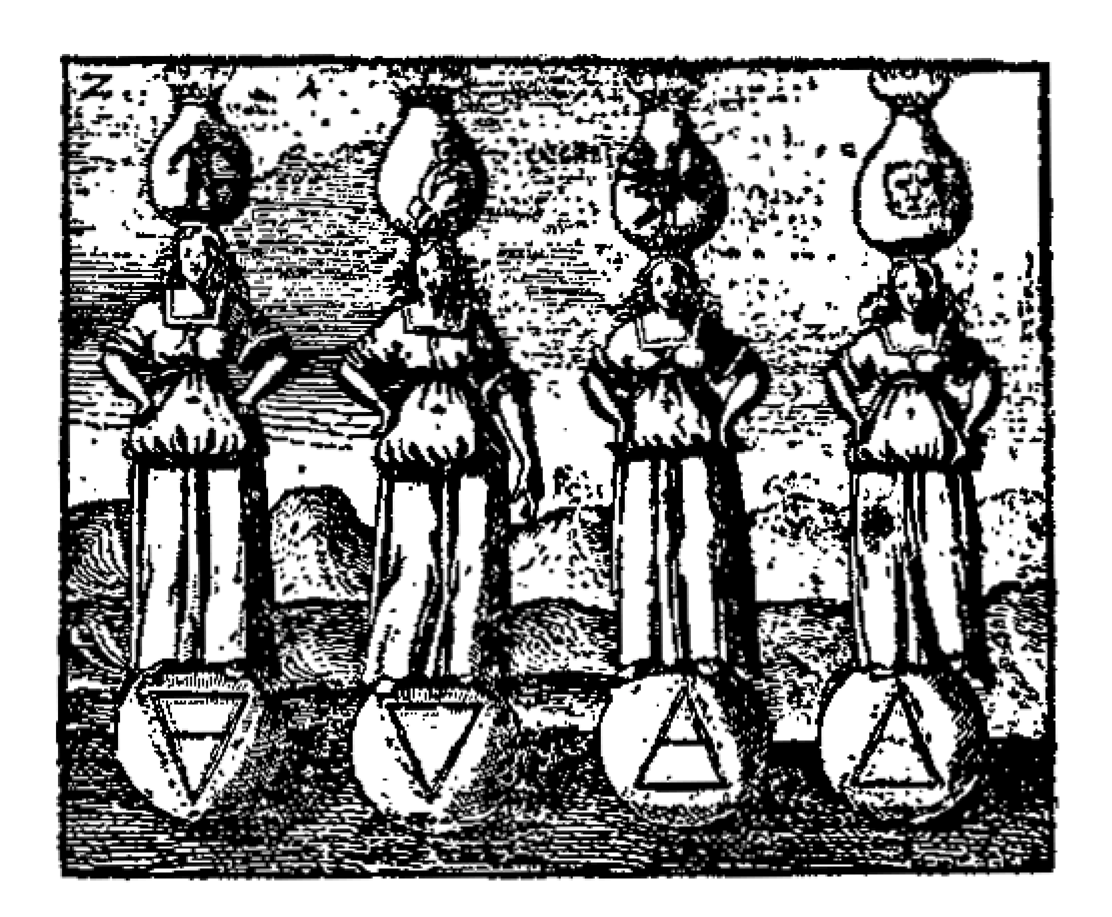
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[81] FOLIER. – It is to concoct, to digest the Matter of the Great Work in order to convert it into the *leafy earth* (matter at the black colour), in which the seed of gold must be sowed. - *Pernety*.

[82] INCERER. – to cause inceration, which see, Notes p. 87.

[83] Abcesses.

[84] An herpes of a very malignant character, often affecting the cartilage of the nose and causing sometimes the total destruction of this organ. E.B.



Of the Maladies of the Metals

The first defect of the metals arises from the first mixture of the principles with quicksilver, and the second is found in the union of the sulphurs and mercury. The more the elements are refined, the more homogeneous they are, and the more they have of weight, malleability, fusion, extension, fulgidity,[85] and permanent incorruptibility.

Thus, there are two kinds of maladies in the metals, the first is called original and incurable, the second arises from the diversity of the sulphur which causes their imperfection and their maladies, namely, the leprosy of Saturn, the jaundice of Venus, the hoarseness of Jupiter, the dropsy of Mercury and the gall of Mars.

The dropsy of Mercury arises from too much aqueousness and crudity, caused by the coldness of the matrix in which it is engendered, and its insufficiency of concoction. This fault is an original sin which all the other metals share. This coldness, this crudity, this aqueousness can be cured only by the heat and igneity of a very powerful sulphur.

Besides this malady, the other metals have one which arises from their internal as well as external sulphur. This latter, being only accidental can be easily separated, because it is not of the first mixture of the elements. It is black, impure, ill-smelling, it does not mix with the radical Sulphur, because it is heterogeneous to it. It is not susceptible of a decoction which may render it radical and perfect.

[85] Fulgidity, or brilliancy.

The radical sulphur cleanses, thickens, fixes into a perfect body the radical mercury, while the second sulphur suffocates, absorbs and coagulates it with its own impurities and crudities. One sees a proof of this, in the coagulation of common mercury, made by the vapor of the sulphur of Saturn, distinguished by that of Jupiter.

This impure sulphur causes all the difference of the imperfect metals. Therefore the malady of the metals is only accidental; then, there is a remedy to cure them, and this remedy is the Philosophical Powder, or Philosophical Stone, called for this reason, *Powder of Projection*. To use it for the metals, enclose it in a little wax, in proportion to the quantity of metal to be transmuted, and throw it on the mercury placed in a crucible on the fire, when the mercury is at the point of smoking. It is necessary that the other metals be melted and purified. Leave the crucible on the fire until after the detonation, and then draw it out, or let it cool in the fire.

Of the times of the Stone

"The times of the Stone are indicated" says d'Espagnet, "by the Philosophical and Astronomical Water. The first White work, must be finished in the house of the moon; the second in the second house of Mercury. The first work in the Red in the second domicile of Venus, and the second or last, in the house of exaltation of Jupiter; for, from him our King must receive his scepter and his crown, ornamented with precious rubies."

Philalethes, (*Loco. cit. p. 156*), continually advises the Artist to instruct himself well as to the weight, measure, time and fire. He will never succeed if he is ignorant of the five following things, concerning the medicine of the third order.

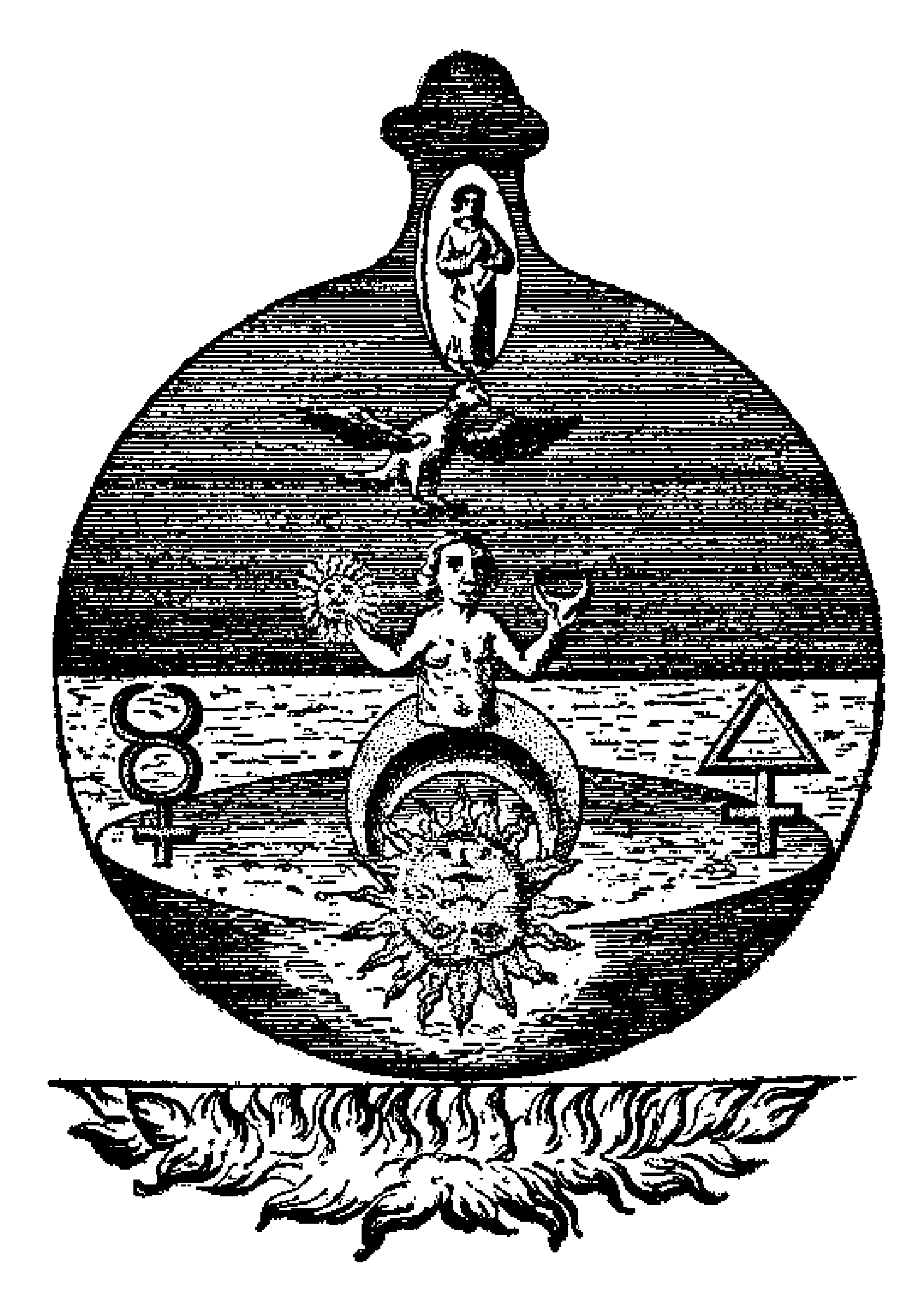
The Philosophers reduce the years to months, the months to weeks, and the weeks to days.

Every dry thing drinks up eagerly the moisture of its species.

It acts on this humidity after it has imbibed it, with much more force and activity than before.

The more Earth and the less Water there is, the more perfect will be the solution. The true, natural solution can be made only with things of the same nature and that which dissolves the Moon, dissolves also the Sun.

As to the time required for the perfection of the Work, one can conclude nothing, with certainty, from what the Philosophers say, because some, in determining it, do not speak of the time required for the preparation of the agents: others treat only of the Elixir; others confound the two works; those who make mention of the work at the Red State, do not speak always of the multiplication; others speak only of the work at the White State; others have their own particular meaning. This is why so much difference is found in works on this subject. One says that twelve years are necessary for the Work, others ten, seven, three, one and a half, fifteen months; sometimes it is a certain number of weeks. One Philosopher has entitled his work, *The work of three days*. Another has said that only four are necessary. Pliny, the naturalist, says that Philosophical month consists of forty days. Finally, all is mystery, with the Philosophers.



Conclusion

This entire treatise is drawn from the authors; I have, almost always, made use of their own expressions. I have quoted some of them, from time to time, so as to show that I have spoken according to them. When I have not quoted their works, it is because I did not have them at hand. One cannot fail to remark a perfect harmony between them, although they speak only in enigmas and allegories. I had, at first intended to give many extracts, from the Twelve Keys of Basil Valentin, because he has, oftener than the others, employed the allegories of the gods of Fable and because, his work would have, consequently more immediate relation with the following treatise; but enigmas are not explained by enigmas; moreover this work is common enough, while the others are not so.

In order to understand, more easily, the explanations which I give in this treatise on Hieroglyphics, one must know that the Philosophers, usually give the name male or father, to the sulphurous principle, and the name, female to the mercurial principle. The fixed is also male or agent; the volatile is female or patient. The result of the union of the two is the Philosophical Child, generally male, sometimes female, when the matter has arrived only at the white state, because it has not, then, all the fixity of which it is susceptible; the Philosophers have also called it, Luna, Diana and Redness,

Sun, Apollo, Phœbus. The mercurial water and the volatile earth, are always female, often mother, as Ceres, Latona, Semela, Europa, etc. The water is ordinarily designated by the names, daughters, nymphs, naiads, etc. The internal fire is always masculine and active. Impurities are indicated by monsters.

Basil Valentin, whom I have before quoted, introduces the gods of Fable, or the Planets, as interlocutors, in the short abrégé which he gives at the beginning of his Treatise on the Twelve Keys. The following is the substance of it.

Dissolved from good gold, as Nature teaches, so says this Author, you will find a germ, which is the beginning, the middle and the end of the work. From this germ our gold and its mate are produced, namely, a subtle and penetrating spirit, a soul, delicate, clear and pure, and a body, or salt which is a balm of the Stars. These three things are united in our mercurial water. This water was conducted to the god Mercury, its father, who married it, from their union came an incombustible oil. Mercury threw out his eagle wings, devoured his dragon tail, and attacked Mars, who caused him to be imprisoned, and appointed Vulcan as his jailer. Saturn presented himself and implored the other gods to avenge the injuries which Mercury had inflicted upon him. Jupiter approved the complaints of Saturn and gave his orders, which were executed. Mars then appeared with a flaming sword, and gave it to Vulcan, so that he might execute the sentence, pronounced against Mercury, and reduce the bones of this god to powder. Diana, or the Moon, complained that Mercury held her brother in prison with him, and that he should be released; Vulcan would not hear her prayer, and did not even yield to that of the beautiful Venus, who presented herself with all her charms. But, finally, the Sun appeared, in all his glory, covered with his purple mantle.

I end this treatise by the same allegory as d’Espagnet, The Golden Fleece is guarded by a three-headed Dragon; the first comes from Water, the second from Earth, the third from Air. These three heads, must be united, by the operations, into a single one, which will be powerful enough to devour all the other Dragons. Call upon God, that he may enlighten you; if he accords to you this Golden Fleece, use it only for His glory, the good of your neighbour and your own welfare.



Addenda.

Dictionary of Hermetic Symbols

From Albert Poisson's

Theories et Symboles des Alchimistes.

ANGEL. — Sometimes symbolises sublimation, the ascension of a volatile principle, as in the figures of the *Viatorium Spagyricum*.

ANIMALS — General Rule: 1. Whenever two animals of the same species and of different sexes are found, they signify Sulphur and Mercury prepared for the Great Work, or also the fixed and the volatile. The male represents the fixed, Sulphur; the female represents the volatile, Mercury. These animals are united to signify conjunction, (*Figures of Lambsprinck*); or fighting to symbolise the fixation of the volatile, or the volatilisation of the fixed, (*Figures of B. Valentin*). 2. A terrestrial animal facing an aerian animal in the same figure indicate the fixed and the

volatile. 3. Animals may symbolise the four elements: Earth, (lion, ox); Air, (eagle); Water, (whale, fishes); Fire, (salamander, dragon).

APOLLO. — Same signification as the sun.

BATH. — Symbol: 1. Of the dissolution of gold and silver; 2. Of the purification of these metals.

BED. — Symbol of the philosophical egg.

BIRDS. — Ascending: volatilisation, ascension, sublimation; descending: precipitation, condensation. When these two symbols are united in the same figure, they signify distillation. Birds opposed to terrestrial animals signify Air, or the volatile principle.

BLUNT INSTRUMENTS. — Symbols of fire.

CHAOS. — Symbol of the Unity of Matter and sometimes of the black colour of putrefaction.

CHAMBER. — When the king and the queen are shut therein, it is the symbol of the Philosophical Egg.

CHILD. — Clothed in royal robe, or simply crowned, it is the symbol of the Philosopher's Stone, sometimes of the red colour of the Magisterium.

CIRCUMFERENCE. — Unity of matter, universal harmony.

CROW. — Symbol of the black colour, or putrefaction.

CROWN. — Symbol of chemical royalty, of metallic perfection. In the *Margarita pretiosa*, the six metals are at first represented as slaves, bareheaded at the feet of the king, but after their transmutation, they bear a crown.

DIANA. – Same signification as the Moon.

DOG. – Symbol of Sulphur, of gold. The dog devoured by a wolf signifies the purification of gold by antimony. Dog and bitch: Fixed and volatile.

DOVE. – Symbol of the grey colour which precedes immediately the white colour, or Diana's Regimen.

DRAGON. – A dragon biting its tail: unity of matter. A dragon among flames: symbol of fire. Several dragons fighting each other indicate putrefaction. A dragon without wings, the fixed; the dragon with wings, the volatile.

EAGLE. – Symbol of volatilisation and also of the acids employed in the Magisterium. An eagle devouring a lion signifies the volatilisation of the fixed by the volatile. Two fighting eagles have the same meaning.

FLOWERS. – In general, flowers represent the colours of the Great Work.

FOUNTAIN. – Three fountains represent the three principles. Fountain where king and queen come to bathe themselves has the same signification as bath, which see Bath.

HERMAPHRODITE. – Sulphur and Mercury after their conjunction; often the word REBIS is written upon his breast.

JUPITER. – Symbol of tin.

KING AND QUEEN. – See Man and Woman.

LION. – Symbol of the fixed, Sulphur, when alone. If carrying wings, it represents the volatile, Mercury. The lion represents also the mineral, (green vitriol), from whence is extracted the oil of vitriol, (sulphuric acid), which was so extensively used by the alchemists. The lion opposed to three other animals represents the element. Earth. In fine it is the symbol of the Stone. The lioness represents the volatile.

MAN AND WOMAN. – Sulphur and Mercury. Naked, gold and silver in an impure state; united, conjunction; lying in a sepulchre, Sulphur and Mercury in the philosophical egg.

MARRIAGE. – Symbol of conjunction, union of Sulphur and Mercury, of the king and queen. The priest who performs the ceremony represent Salt, means of union between the two other principles.

MARS. – Symbol of iron, and of the orange colour.

MERCURY. – Symbol of silver prepared for the Work.

MOON. – Volatile principle, female, Mercury of the Philosopher, silver prepared for the Work.

MOUNTAIN. – Furnace of the philosophers; Summit of the philosophical egg.

NEPTUNE. – Symbol of Water.

PHOENIX. – Symbol of the red colour.

RAIN. – Condensation, white colour, (albification).
SALAMANDER. – Symbol of fire, sometimes signifies the red or white colour.
SATURN. – Symbol of lead. Figures also the black colour, putrefaction.
SCYTHE. – Same signification as the sword.
SEPULCHRE. – Philosophical egg.
SERPENT. – In general, same significaiton as the dragon. Three serpents, the three principles. The two serpents of the caduceus signify Sulphur and Mercury. A winged serpent, the volatile principle; deprived of wings, the fixed principle. A crucified serpent: fixation of the volatile. A serpent with several heads represents the three principles emanating from one universal matter or cosmic ether.
SKELETON. – Putrefaction, black colour.
SPHERE. – Unity of matter.
SQUARE. – Symbol of the four elements.
SUN. – Ordinary gold, or gold prepared for the work, also Philosophic Sulphur.
SWORD. – Symbol of fire.
TREES. – A tree bearing moons signifies the lunar work, or transmutation of metals into silver; if it bears suns, it is the symbol of the G.W. or solar work. If it bears the signs of the seven metals, or those of the Sun, the Moon and five stars, it represents the inique Matter from whence originate all metals.
TRIANGLE. – Symbol of the three principles.
VENUS. – Symbol of copper.
VULCAN. – Symbol of fire, ordinarily represented as a lame man.
WOLF. – Symbol of antimony.

Alchemical Characters.

Pernety – Eliphas Levi – Albert Poisson – de Guaita, etc.

ÆS USTUM.

AIR.

ALEMBIC.

ALKALI, SALT.

ALUDEL.

ALUM, COMMON.

AMALGAM.

ANTIMONY.

AQUA FORTIS.

AQUA REGIA.

AQUARIUS, MULTIPLICATION, SALT NITRE.

AQUA VITA,

ASHES.

ARGENT-VIVE.

ARIES: ANTIMONY, CALCINATION.

ARSENIC.

ASPHALTUM, CONGELATION.

AZOTH.

BATH.

BATH, STEAM.

BATH, WATER.

CONGELATION.

COPPER, OR VENUS.

COPPER, BURNT.

COPPERAS.

CRUCIBLE.

CRYSTAL.

DAY.

DIGEST, TO.

DIGESTION.

DISSOLUTION.

DISTIL, TO.

DISTILLATION.

FERMENTATION.

BORAX.	
BRASS.	
BRICK, PULVERIZED.	
CALCINE, TO.	
CALCINATION.	
CALX.	C, G,
CAMPHOR.	
CAPRICORN, ALUM, FERMENTATION.	♑,
CAPUT MORTUUM.	
CERUSE.	
CIMENT, TO.	
CINNABAR.	
COAGULATE, TO.	H̄, Ē,

FEU DE ROUE.

FILINGS OF IRON.

FILTER, TO.

FIRE.

FIX, TO.

FIXATION.

GEMINI, FIXATION, ORPIMENT.

GLASS.

GOLD.

GUM.

HOUR.

INCINERATION.

IRON, OR MARS.

JUPITER, OR TIN.	♃
LATTEN.	
LEAD, OR SATURN.	♄, P.
LEO, DIGESTION, OR GOLD.	♌
LIBRA, OR SUBLIMATION.	♎
LIME.	C, G,
LIME, QUICK.	
LITHARGE.	
LUTE, TO.	
MAGNESIA.	
MAGNET.	
MARCASSITE.	
MERCURY.	☿,

MERCURY, PRECIPITATED.

MERCURY, SUBLIMATED.

MONTH.

MULTIPLICATION.

NIGHT.

NITRE, OR SALTPETRE.

OIL.

ORPIMENT.

ORPIMENT, RED.

PISCES, MERCURY, PROJECTION.

POWDER.

PRECIPITATE, TO.

PROJECTION.

PURIFY, TO.

QUICKLIME.

QUICKSILVER.

QUINTESSENCE. E,

QUICK SULPHUR.

REALGAR.

RETORT.

SAFFRON OF MARS. C,

SAFFRON OF VENUS.

SAGITTARIUS, ALUM, INCINERATION.

SALAMMONIAC.

SALT.

SALT-ALKALI.

SALT, COMMON.

SALTPETRE.

SALT, ROCK.

SAND.

SAPO SAPIENTIÆ.

SCORPIO, SEPARATION.

SILVER, OR MOON.

SODA.

SPIRIT.

SPIRIT OF WINE.

STEEL.

STRATUM SUPER STRATUM. SSS,

SULPHUR.

SULPHUR, BLACK.	🜏
SULPHUR, SOPHIC.	
SULPHUR, QUICK.	
SUBLIMATE, TO.	♎, ,
SUBLIMATION.	♎
SUN, OR GOLD.	☉
TALCUM.	
TARTAR.	, , ,
TAURUS, CONGELATION.	♉
TIN.	♃
TUTTY.	
URINE.	
VERT-DE-GRIS.	🜨

VINEGAR.

VINEGAR, DISTILLED.

VIRGO, DISTILLATION.

VITRIOL.

VITRIOL, BLUE.

VITRIOL, WHITE.

WATER-BATH.

WAX

WICK.

WINE.

WORK COMPLETED.

YEAR.